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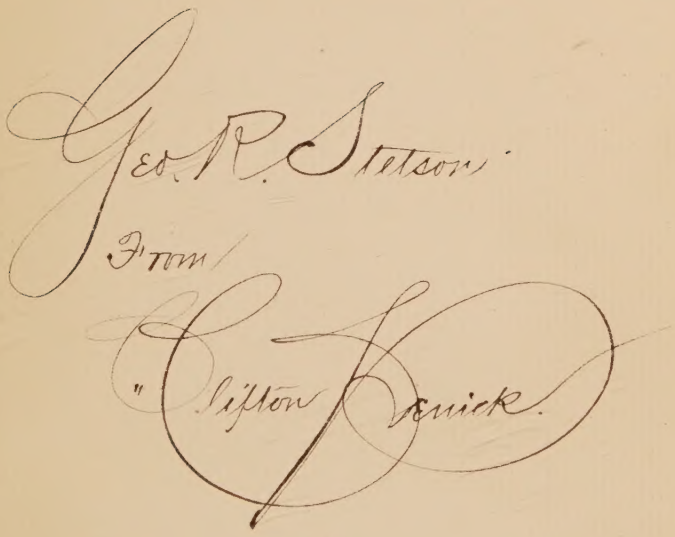
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IN THIS PRESENT WORLD

BY

GEORGE HODGES

DEAN OF THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

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TO

WILLIAM DENSMORE MAXON

AND

JULIUS WALTER ATWOOD

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PREFACE.

THE first sermon in this book has been preached forty times.

Of the others, some were spoken in Calvary Church, Pittsburg, some in the chapel of Harvard University, and all in St. John's Memorial Chapel of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge.

In that which is entitled "St. John the Prophet" I have allowed certain local references to stand. The sermon on "What Jesus Said of Himself" is obviously indebted to Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures.

THE DEANERY, CAMBRIDGE,
Feast of the Annunciation, 1897.

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THE GROUND OF CHRISTIAN CERTAINTY.

"LORD, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Even the apostles were perplexed by the Christian religion. There were questions which they could not answer. There were problems which they could not solve. Every day Jesus Christ said something which they could not understand.

Sometimes he gave them explanations, but quite as often he kept silence, waiting till they should be able to understand the answer. For a problem in quadratic equations cannot be made clear to a little child. The solution may be never so accurate, the child cannot understand it. There must be much preliminary growth in wisdom, with instruction and discipline in the art of thinking. The child's mind must be stronger before it can grapple with the difficulties of numbers.

That is true also of the highest poetry. It may

be read in the kindergarten; every word will enter into the ears of the circle of obedient listeners, but the uplift and the comfort and the spiritual help that others find between the lines will not be given to the children. They will look and listen, and get little.

So it is in religion. Jesus often gave no explanation, because, as he said, the disciples were not ready to receive it. He had many things to say, he told them, which they could not bear. They must first grow; they must be strong with the strength which comes by spiritual combat; they must be better Christians before the deeper words could be intelligently heard.

One of these hard sayings Jesus had just now uttered, and the number of his followers had thereby been lessened. Many turned away offended. He looked about at his apostles, and asked a question, which shows in a swift glimpse the loneliness in which he lived: "Will ye also go away?" They answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." In all their confusion and perplexity and doubt one thing was clear—they believed Jesus Christ. When their own minds could not give an answer they were content to take his word.

The great thing that we want in religion is certainty. We must be sure. The recitation of the creed is very well, as far as it goes. The acceptance of the doctrines of orthodox theology is excellent,

as far as it goes. But when trial comes, or sore temptation, or pain, or grief, then we find out how much or how little all that conventional belief implies. When the sky is black above our head, and the way is blank before our feet, and seems only to lead over the sheer cliff into the pit, then we cry out, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" —find the divine guide, into whose hand we may put our hand, that he may lead us into light.

But the difficulty is that when we study the deep questions of religion we find that we get speedily into a region of inadequate answers, and after that, if we still go on, into a place of contradiction.

Take, for example, so plain and apparently so easy a doctrine—until we come to consider it—as that of the existence of God. Have we seen God, or touched or heard him? Have we any sense which brings us witness of him? Can we prove that there is a God? And if there is, what is he like? What is God? Evidently he must be infinite, for we cannot think of God as being less than infinite; and he must be a person, for personality is the highest form of being of which we have any conception. God is an infinite person. But the youngest member of the graduating class at the high school will be able to tell us that infinity and personality do not go together; one contradicts the other. We fall into confusion. Some people never recover from this initial per-

plexity. Some young men and women in college, beginning to question and to think, and coming upon this or other like perplexities, for a time lose faith.

This, however, is but an illustration of the danger of a little knowledge; for when we keep on thinking we presently perceive that a similar region of contradiction and mystery lies at the end of a series of questions about anything—about any common stone in the pavement of the street, or any blade of grass which grows beside the road. Religion has no monopoly of mystery; the creed has no exclusive possession of unanswerable questions.

Take a common stone and question it. What is it made of? It is made of granite. And what is granite made of? Granite is made of this and that and the other, till we get back to matter. And what is matter made of? Matter is made of atoms. And what is an atom? At once there comes a group of philosophers to tell us that an atom is a whirling ring of force. What does that mean? A whirling ring of metal we can understand, but a whirling ring of force—what is it? The definition serves but to complicate the difficulty. In the midst of our confusion another company of wise men advances to inform us that an atom is an indivisible particle. And we begin to consider what an indivisible particle may be, and we find that the thing eludes us. We cannot

even imagine an indivisible particle; we cannot think of anything so small that it cannot be divided into two halves. And while we are wandering in this new uncertainty a third company of philosophers assures us that the truth is that matter does not exist at all; it is all in our eye; it is but an impression made upon the senses by we know not what. The external world, if there be any,—and the chances, they tell us, are against it,—is an undiscovered country.

Thus a common stone picked up in the street has at the heart of it a mystery as profound and as insoluble as lurks in any sentence of the creed.

Or take a blade of grass and ask it questions. Presently you arrive at another mystery equally inscrutable—the mystery of life. There it is, this strange presence which we call life; it is in the blade of grass, and is the most important thing about it. Yet no one has ever seen it; no test of the chemist has ever touched it. It lies in the growing leaf, invisible and intangible as the soul is in the body, or as God is in the world; and the wisest man who ever lived has never even so much as begun to understand it.

It is thus a mistake to think that religion is different from the rest of life because it has to do with the mysterious. All the foundations of thought and of existence are built upon the unseen.

It would almost seem as if this beginning of

our search for certainty had led us in quite the opposite direction. All truth, we might infer, must be suspected; nature does but mock us. A simple illustration, however, may serve to reassure us. We hold a page of print at a distance from the eye, and the page is blurred—the lines run together. But really there is no blur on the page; the blur is but the natural result of the removal of the page beyond the focus of our sight. That is the cause, in like manner, of the confusion and contradiction into which we come in the study of hard problems: we have exceeded the focus of our intellectual sight. The blur is not in the nature of things, but in the imperfection of our senses. There is no conflict in the truth itself; it is simply beyond the limits within which we are able to think clearly.

Nevertheless, the truths of physics seem to most people to be more real than the truths of theology. What we want is to be as sure of things spiritual and eternal as we are of the experiences of every day in the world of bread and meat and sun and rain.

This assurance we may reach along either one of two well-traveled roads—along the way of argument or along the way of authority.

Argument is a process of reasoning from the known to the unknown. The Rosetta stone furnishes a good symbol. An inscription was written on it in three languages—in hieroglyphic, in de-

motic, and in Greek. Up to that moment no modern man had ever read a word of hieroglyphic writing. There were stupendous and mysterious monuments set deep in the sands of Egypt and covered from top to bottom with sentences which no man knew. Now, at last, in the Rosetta stone, this blind language was set side by side with the familiar speech of men, with demotic and with Greek, which the whole neighborhood could understand; and by simple inference from that which was already known, the unknown opened its dumb lips and began to speak. That is the course which reason takes when it sets out on journeys of discovery along the way of argument.

Take again, for example, the doctrine of the existence of God. We begin with what our hands can handle and our eyes can see, with the world in which we live. We note its marvelous adjustments, its incomparable, and even inconceivable, perfections of detail, its boundless wealth of beauty, its constant and accurate discipline of universal law. We study it with telescope and microscope. We dig down into it and read the records of its building; and we say irresistibly, after getting even a glimpse of this wonderful structure, of this great house in which we live, that the world did not merely happen so, did not come by chance into its stupendous being. A lot of vagrant atoms, drifting in the cosmic wind, did not make this world. The universe did not

idly blunder into existence, flung by unknown forces out of unknown voids, as a country lad may throw the paring of an apple over his shoulder to see what letter it may form upon the ground behind him.

And then from the world without we turn to the world within, to our own selves. An English philosopher wrote a book in which he made the facts of the physical world his argument, and proved to his own sure satisfaction that there is no God at all. He was quite positive about it. But before he died he wrote another book, in which he took that back. I forgot, he said, one fact which should have been included in the major premise; I forgot man! Taking man into account, considering him in his personality and as a moral and intellectual being, I must change the conclusion of my reasoning. I am sure that behind the universe of which man is the highest part is an intellectual and moral and personal Maker; I believe in God.

Thus we arrive at the idea of God by the way of argument.

The result of argument, it is true, is only probability. Sometimes the probability is so strong as to amount to certainty; sometimes it is so weak that the addition or subtraction of a fact or two on one side or the other would change the inference. Nevertheless, be it strong or weak, probability is one of the elemental influences in human

life. We live every day in obedience to it. Every plan we have is based—to take but a single instance—upon the probability that the sun will rise to-morrow morning. That is nothing more than probability; it is not capable of proof; science can do no more than guess at it. The sun, we know, has risen very early in the morning for a great many years, and is altogether likely to continue to do so for a great many years to come; but beyond that we can affirm nothing; it is only a probability.

Ought not a man to be as sensible in his religion as he is in his business? Ought he not to weigh the probabilities as carefully on Sunday as he does on Monday? The path of argument may be beset with mists and pitfalls, and he may not be able to see the end; yet he can see where the path probably leads. Is it not the part of wisdom to consider the tremendous probabilities of religion? That there is a God; that there is a hope and a way of being saved out of our sins; that there is a life to come—he that is wise, will he not ponder these things? will he not take these probabilities into serious account?

The great difficulty, however, which is encountered in the endeavor to reach religious truth by the way of independent reasoning is found in the demands which this process makes upon the reasoner. To be able to argue accurately one must have these four most serious and unusual posses-

sions—knowledge and ability and time and character.

It is manifestly idle to undertake an argument without the facts. It is, indeed, a venture which is daily made, and which is accordingly one of the most fertile causes of political and social and theological controversy. Even a slight increase of patience and frankness in the ascertainment of the real truth would disarm a great many antagonists who are at present riding full tilt against windmills. It is plain, nevertheless, to all reflective persons that conclusions which are based upon mistaken premises are but houses built on shifting sands, and that the only material out of which to construct a durable foundation is solid facts. And the arguer must have all the facts. Many a time a new fact, before undiscovered or unconsidered, has come in to destroy the most carefully planned edifices of argument. But these great problems in religion which we would solve involve innumerable facts, reach out into the region of the immensities and the eternities, and include the invisible and the intangible, and no man lives who can say truly that he possesses all the facts about them.

Let us suppose, however, that we have the necessary knowledge. The next requirement is ability, that is, ability to reason, to draw from the facts their actual inferences, to know precisely what they mean. For the assembling of facts together is of small consequence unless the facts

are made to speak, and to speak the truth. Are we equal to this imperative accuracy? If we had the facts, would we be able by our own judgment to draw the true conclusions from them?

Evidently not, unless, in addition to this possession of knowledge and of ability, we have also the third requirement—time. The deep, delicate, and extraordinarily difficult problems which are presented to us in religion demand continuous thinking. Everybody of intellectual experience knows that a hard problem, whether in mathematics, in engineering, in finance, or in theology, needs time, and a great deal of it. Whoever proposes to arrive at an independent conclusion touching any hard question in religion must take his complete collection of the facts and his expert mind into a quiet place where he can stay and think; and he must stay there not for a day only, and not for a week only. This is not generally understood. Many people have an idea that theological problems are somehow easier than other problems and have no need of the services of specialists. This, however, is a great mistake. These matters must be determined by trained students. They cannot be settled while a man is sawing wood or counting money, or while he is engaged in any other distracting occupation. They need the whole mind and time. But we have no time. We are busy people. "Leisure" is a word which for the majority of us is obsolete. We have our daily work to do. It is

frankly impossible for many of us to reason out these problems in theology, because, to say nothing of other lack of qualification, we have no time.

There still remains the necessity of character; for in all the higher ranges of thought there is required in argument something more than knowledge, something more than intellectual alertness. For example, see how it is in art. Nobody can judge with accuracy of the value of a picture unless he has what we may call the artistic sense. Something in his soul must go out toward that picture. Nothing else can qualify him. He must bring a similar gift also to his judgment of a piece of music. It would be folly to claim that his judgment of a sonata was of value merely because he understood the mechanism of an organ. He must be in sympathy with the music; he must have the musical sense. This is equally true in literature. Mr. Darwin, after a long life diligently spent in the study of physical nature, found that he no longer cared for Shakespeare. When he tried to read "Hamlet" he went to sleep. No sane person would account that verdict to be a serious criticism upon the play of "Hamlet." Yet it is hard to get even reasonable people to see that this, which is true in art, in music, and in literature, is of the same meaning in religion. No one's opinion about music is worth anything unless he is musical; nor about literature unless he is literary; nor about art unless he is artistic. But in religion, some

imagine, everybody's opinion counts; Professor Huxley is as good a judge as the Apostle John. It is absurd. Whoever would pronounce upon the problems of religion must be religious. Jesus Christ said that again and again. "The pure in heart shall see God," because they only have the clearness of vision which is essential to that sight. He who does the will of God shall know the truth of God. It is not an arbitrary dogma, but the statement of an elemental fact. In proportion, therefore, as we live the life of the spirit and grow in grace, we will increase in the knowledge of God. That sets a high and difficult standard. Who of us has attained to it?

There is no intention in all this, however, to discourage or disparage reason. Reason is one of God's divinest gifts to man, and is meant to be used, and it is to be used in religion as in every other part of life. There is nothing in religion which is too sacred to be considered, questioned, and examined. Everything is open, because it is true. They who believe it welcome all testing and investigation. Because it is eternal, new knowledge of the truth must result from new studies in it. The path of argument, the narrow way of independent and original research, is the royal road in theology as it is everywhere else, and blessed are they who can go therein; but it is a royal road because it is meant for kings, and kings are few in number. Can we take that path? If we can, let

us by all means do so; but if we cannot, if we lack any one of the four indispensable requirements, we may well be honest with ourselves; let us confess it.

There are two ways of getting over the Atlantic Ocean. We may build a ship ourselves, making the design of it, inventing the machinery, and putting it all together, and then with our own hand steering it across; or we may go, like other plain people, to a booking-office, and pay our fare, and get aboard a ship which others have constructed for us, and thus arrive at the haven where we would be. It is plain that the commonplace course is the only one which is open to most of us. That same course must be taken also in the voyage across the seas of speculation to the solid ground of religious certainty. Few of us can reach truth by the way of argument; we must take the other path, the way of authority.

It is true that "authority" is not a pleasant nor persuasive word, but that is due not so much to the word itself as to the adjective which is commonly implied in qualification of it, the adjective "official." Official authority is exhibited when one rises, with great impressiveness of manner, to say, "Because I have such and such a title before or after my name, therefore you must believe what I tell you, and precisely as I tell you, and for no other reason than that you have my word for it, asking no questions." There is a fine and gener-

ally commendable quality in human nature which prompts us immediately to say no to that demand. We object by instinct to the matter of it, and still more to its manner. But that is official authority.

Take, now, this offensive quality out of the thing, and consider, not official, but personal, authority. Here is a group of people who have long been occupied in the discussion of some hard matter, getting no good answer. They have studied it on this side and on that, and have seen no light. The tangle seems to get harder with every step. At last into the midst of this company comes one who is wiser than any of them, whom they know and thoroughly respect, who has taken that hard matter and thought it through from beginning to end —who understands it and is an "authority" upon it. Will they not welcome him? Will they not listen to his words? Will they not take the papers on which they have written their lame and impotent endeavors after solution and put them in the waste-basket? When he tells them what the real answer is, will they not receive it and be sure of it?

As a matter of fact, we depend upon authority for most of the knowledge we possess. Our scientific information, for example, we have derived, not from our own experiments, but from the conclusions of the great scientific masters. We believe, in opposition to the universal doctrine of our ancestors, and in flat contradiction to the plain

evidence of our senses, that the earth moves about the sun. But we believe it, not because we have found it out along the way of argument, but because we have been so informed on good authority. Indeed, if we were to cease to accept truth on the ground of authority, we would be reduced to the condition of infants or of savages; we would be compelled to begin life in company with primitive man.

What we want, then, is to find in religion some authority which may become to us a source of assurance, like the authority in the confidence of which we live our daily lives. Where shall we find such an authority? Some say, in the Bible; others, in the church. But these authorities are still questioned. Back we go, behind the Bible and the church, to the Lord Jesus Christ. There we find the supreme spiritual Master, who shall teach us in religion as the scientific masters teach us in science; yes, and with far higher authority.

For, think of it. Consider him at the least and lowest. Here is one who lived almost nineteen hundred years ago in an obscure Syrian province, since whose time the world has gone on passing through revolution after revolution, dismissing its old teachers and inviting new ones over and again, discarding discredited philosophies, abandoning disproved conclusions, discharging its old guides, dethroning its former kings; and yet no word of this Master has ever been found to be

mistaken; no sentence of his has become obsolete; but, on the contrary, the men who to-day are thinking the deepest and the longest thoughts, and looking ahead with clearest vision into the coming century, declare that the only solution of our immediate and impending problems lies in the acceptance and the application of his teachings.

There is no scientific nor philosophical authority to compare with this. Above all other teachers of the race stands this supreme spiritual Master. May we not take his word? Is it not a reasonable act, worthy of a reasonable man? We are perplexed and distressed over some hard problem in religion, and we get no answer to our questions; we are ready to give up our faith. But the trouble is that we are attempting to attain truth along a path which we are not strong enough to climb; the other is the way for us—the way of authority, the way of the word of Jesus Christ. May we not take it and be satisfied? He who knew more about God and more about man and more about pain than we could know if we were to study for a thousand years—may we not ask him to teach us? May we not put aside all our tangled and inconclusive disputations and say, "I do not understand, but he said thus and thus about it, and I am content with that; I accept it and am sure of it on his blessed and satisfying authority"?

This is but to be as reasonable in religion as we are in the other alternatives of life.

And this is true when we consider Jesus only at the least and lowest. Think of him, then, at the most and best—God manifest in man, God with us, the Eternal speaking to us, that he may dispel our doubts and tell us what we want to know. Put it away; put the weary sum away and take his answer.

Thus at last we come to him with the apostles, taking his hand, and saying their words after them: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." In him we find the ground of Christian certainty.

WITH OPEN EYES.

"THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Thus has God made himself known to us in sky and earth and sea, and then, answering the questions which were yet unanswered, in the face of Jesus Christ.

The summer carries us into the near presence of one of these revelations. We know what it brings of satisfaction and of benediction. Ocean and forest, lake and hill and river, speak to us in that intimate language which has no need of words, declaring the glory of God and showing the wonders of his handiwork. We say the sentence over and over. It is one of the interpretive utterances which teach us what to think and help us to think it: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and

the firmament showeth his handiwork." We know what that means.

Indeed, as the years pass, and the summers come and come again, and we grow into closer acquaintance with the gardens and the fields of God, and bring to them year by year a deeper experience of life and a renewed power of understanding and appreciation, nature, which makes friends with man somewhat reluctantly and holds no conversation with unsympathetic folk, speaks to us in tones clear and confidential.

At first we are like the prophet's servant, who saw nothing but a valley and a hill and sheep grazing among the rocks; but the day comes when by some grace of God our eyes are opened, and we behold the angels which Zechariah saw amid the trees, and the hosts of God are encamped along the slopes of the mountains, and in the wind we hear the voice of the Eternal, and across the lake comes One who walks upon the water bringing the benediction of peace, and the new heavens and the new earth shine about us. For the new heavens and the new earth are here now. That was a foolish company of deluded souls who met one morning in Union Square, expecting to ascend out of the city of New York into the city of God. They needed but to open their eyes even there, where the brick shops shut out the sky, and to see God. God is beside us. The green of the trees, the blue of the sea, the shining of the river,

the splendors of the clouds in the east and west, are the colors of his garments. When we get away out of the crowd into quiet places, where we can sit alone and think, that is made plain and real to us.

There was something fine and high and true intermingled with the error of those ancient creeds which saw a god in every tree and star. It is hard for us in our more practical and prosaic life, wherein the fact obscures the vision, to understand how the world of nature seemed to the simpler people of the earlier time, who had "sight of Proteus rising from the sea," and heard "old Triton blow his wreathèd horn." They dwelt in the realized presence of the divine; all sights and sounds in earth and sky spoke to them of God.

We lose much by our habit of indifference. We walk with head down, pushing our way along, intent upon our errand, and always in a hurry. We get much done, and some become rich in those possessions which commonly pass for wealth among us, but we are the poorer for our inattention and our haste; the best blessings of the day are lost. It would be well if we could keep the appreciation which the summer gives for the world about us and for the quiet pleasures which it offers us, attending still to the processions of the clouds and to the music of the birds, and thus preserving that helpful contact with the simplicity and serenity of nature which is so easy in

July and August, and even in September, but which we are apt to lose in the beginning of October.

We may all be rich if we will. The fortunes of political elections need not greatly distress us. The earth is the Lord's, and it belongs to all those who belong to his family. We his children have property rights in it, every one of us, and may laugh at title-deeds and fences. The best of it is our common possession. We may walk abroad in pride of proprietorship. These are our trees and hills and sea and sun. Commonly, however, we are like the crew which was famished for water in the mouth of the Amazon; they had but to dip their buckets into the sweet sea.

Walter Pater, in his exquisite essay "The Child in the House," speaks of these neglected riches. "And, thinking of the very poor," he says, "it was not the things which most men care most for that he yearned to give them, but fairer roses, perhaps, and power to taste quite as they will, at their ease, and not task-burdened, a certain desirable clear light in the new morning, through which sometimes he had noticed them, quite unconscious of it, on their way to their early toil." That may seem a vague and inadequate benediction. Some might maintain that a good breakfast and a rise in wages were better. But the more it is considered the more of value is discovered in it. The best ideal is to be rather than to have.

"God he doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend."

That is the right prayer. A song in the heart is better than a grand piano in a gilded parlor. And to stand in the new morning, with the sun and the wind in the face, looking out into the day with hope and courage, and appreciatively aware of all the bird notes, and the glints of gold in the grass, and the fresh fragrance of the cool fields, is to experience that thorough joy which is God's blessing upon those who are in accord with him, and which cannot be bought with silver, or gold either. And although, by reason of tasks and taskmasters, this joy is at present impossible to many of the very poor, it is within the daily reach of the great majority of us. Thus much of the best of life is at our hand, waiting for us to take it. God is ever willing to be gracious to us; his mercies are new every morning, his blessings are without end or failure.

Real riches cannot be counted out in coin, neither are they dependent upon the hap or mishap of the market. We are rich in what we are; our best possessions are our experiences. People are troubled because they live in back streets, but the alley is as near heaven as the avenue; all the time, for rich and poor alike, pictures of God's painting hang upon the blue walls of the sky, and roofs of God's rearing, green with the glow of summer, red and golden with the gleam of autumn, cover us as we walk, and the birds sing.

"Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again
With leaping sun, with glancing rain."

We have had experience of this revelation of God. We have watched the shadows play along the sides of the high mountains, and the surf dash upon the rocks, and the sun shine in the bright shallows of the brook and along the surface of the lake; we have seen at night

"The gray sea and the long, black land,
And the yellow half-moon, large and low,
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep."

We want to bring this all with us into the work of the winter. We live too much under the roof and behind closed doors beside the fire. We need the country roads and the open fields in the early morning and the late afternoon. The bicycle and the electric car are bringing these privileges within reach even of busy people in crowded cities. If we will, they may serve, like Elijah's chariot of fire, to carry us into the nearer presence of God.

It was proved, however, long ago that nature's instructions in religion are not enough. After all is said, after the heavens have declared the glory

of God, and the firmament has showed his handiwork, and we have learned the lesson and enriched our lives in learning it, there is a lack. For we are not satisfied to know that God is glorious, or that he is great, or that he is the Maker of the world. We want to know something about his personal relation to our own individual selves. We would come into some more close and satisfying acquaintance with him. We would know his will, and would learn how he would have us order our lives. Above all, we would be assured of his interest in us and of his love for us. And of this the natural world has not a word to say. Nature is rigorously impartial and impersonal. The world is fair indeed in summer, and one may lie out under the trees, and watch the water or the hills, and read a pleasant book all the sweet afternoon, and may get a deal of satisfaction out of it, and may imagine that he is coming very close to God. And so he is, if he looks at sky and page in the spirit of Jesus. But when the wind blows, and the storms come, and the waves reach out their hands; when something tragic happens; when we are in trouble, and nature pays no heed; when there are tears in our eyes, and the birds sing as cheerily as ever in the branches; when death is in the neighborhood, and all the industries and gaieties of nature go on without a gleam of sympathy—then we perceive that nature's gospel is only for good weather. It

is like the dial, on which only the sunny hours are counted.

Then one remembers how the apple-trees in the spring were white with blossoms, and how the wind blew most of them into the grass; and it seems to be nature's illustration of our life. God cares for the tree—except in very bad seasons and uncommonly high winds; he takes care that some of the apples shall survive; but most of the white blossoms go, nobody knows nor cares where, and that is the end of them. Thus, it seems, God cares for the race, and in spite of many calamities preserves its life; but the tornado and the tidal wave, the war and the pestilence, destroy thousands, apparently without discrimination, God seeming not to care. The heavens declare the glory of God, but what good is that to us when we want help and light and strong, sympathetic, personal love?

Therefore God makes another manifestation of himself, that he may answer our unanswered questions. We would expect that. If God is our Father,—if, in spite of all the hard things that happen, God does love us,—we would expect that he would tell us. That would be the fatherly thing to do.

But how? Shall he change the course of nature? Shall he ordain that henceforth fire shall burn the bad, but not the good, and disease shall lie in wait for sinners, while the saints go free, and the whirlwind shall select the houses of unprofita-

ble citizens? Shall the uniformity of law be interrupted, that nature may thereby declare not only the glory, but the righteous will, of God? There are times when we desire that, and when we wonder why the world of nature is not governed according to that principle. But when we reflect we find it to be impossible. Impossible, partly by reason of the lack of any sharp discrimination between the good and the bad, for "the bad are as good as the good are bad"; partly on account of the blessed long-suffering of God, who would not that any should perish, but that sinners should be led to repentance; partly, also, because such dealing with us would establish a system of wholly material rewards and punishments, which would debase all goodness, measuring it by the accounts of the market, and would be universally demoralizing; and partly because God knows better than we do what is best, and has, in his infinite wisdom, adjudged it best that there shall be a uniformity of natural law, of which, for good and ill alike, we may be sure.

What then? Shall God choose out a man and teach him, that he may be our teacher? Shall he thus supplement the revelation of nature? That has been the fact from the beginning. God has done that in every nation, in every religion, in every land, since the race was born, and is doing it to-day. He sends us messages by the lips of the best and highest of us. He speaks, and those

who are nearest akin to him understand what he says, and tell us, and we call them prophets and poets.

It is always open to us, however, to doubt that the message which they bring is a divine message. Error is so easy, and to confuse the voice of God with the voice of ignorance or prejudice is so frequent a mistake! Even the best and highest hear imperfectly. What we need, if God would convincingly and adequately speak, is one like ourselves and yet different from ourselves; who shall use our human speech and be acquainted with our daily temptations and walk the common streets, and yet be so blessedly and divinely supreme among us that we may not say that he, too, did but guess at truth. We philosophize, indeed, after the event, and our thoughts are, no doubt, colored by the traditions of our theology; but does it not seem the right and natural, even the inevitable, thing to happen? The revelation made in nature being so inadequate, and the revelation made by saints and scholars being so imperfect, and the heart of man crying out so after the real truth and so desiring to know God surely, what else can we think of that will satisfy? Between the fatherly love of God on the one hand, and the need of man on the other hand, what shall happen that the one may be interpreted to the other, except that which we believe did happen? God is manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. At

last comes One who speaks with authority, who calls himself the Son of man, but who declares at the same time that he and the Father are one. In him God is revealed. In his life and in his words the Eternal utters himself. That of which there is no assurance in the revelation made in the world of nature—the care and love of God for the individual human soul—he comes to teach. God is our Father; not a sparrow falls without his notice; each of us is the own child of God and dear to him eternally. Though skies grow black, and storms are merciless, and sorrow and bereavement lay their heavy burdens on our hearts, Jesus tells us that the eternal Father knows and heeds and loves.

The ascent of the hills and the exploration of the woods bring out of literature into actual life the idea of the value of the guide. We know what it means to have a guide. Without him we are lost and must go about in distress and danger, seeking an unknown way. But when he goes along before we follow confidently, free to enjoy the green light that shines in the heart of the trees, and the fresh springs that rise amid the moss-grown rocks, and all the congregated sounds of the forest life. We know that he knows; we need not think about the points of the compass. The road leads whither we would go, to the high place whence we may get a look out over the wide, green world, or to the home where we may rest.

Apart from Jesus Christ life is a wilderness crowded with unknown dangers, wherein we have lost our way. But in his company, though the path be blind and difficult and beset with bogs and obstacles, we go on with good courage, and the light shines in our hearts—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

THE BUSY DAY.

"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

The king came along the road, smiling to himself. He had beaten all his enemies.

Two armies had been sent against him, so great that both times his heart failed him. When the first arrived he was for surrendering at once, but presently thought better of it, ventured into battle, and won a victory. When the second army came in sight the whole world seemed to be on the march, and the king's people "pitched before them," so the record says, "like two little flocks of kids;" but here again the day was his, and at last his hostile neighbor, hopelessly defeated, brought his crown in his hand and begged for his life. The king was glad and proud.

But as the king rode on, elated and content, a man met him, whose face was black with ashes. And the man cried to the king and said, "I was in the battle; and a prisoner was brought to me

to keep, my life for his life if I let him go. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." And the king said, "You must meet the punishment." And then the man brushed the ashes from his face, and the king looked at him, and behold, he was a prophet. And the prophet said, "You must meet the punishment yourself! You have indeed triumphed in the battle, but you have broken the commandment of the Lord your God. You have done your own will, and the will of the Lord you have disregarded."

So the prophet turned back into the fields, and the king went on "heavy and displeased."

Sometimes the victory is really a defeat. The man goes on amid applause, and the prophet does not meet him, or if he does is disbelieved or unconsidered, and he accounts himself triumphant. He looks back over the fought field and says to himself, "I have succeeded;" and he has succeeded in winning the esteem of men. It is easy to imagine that this carries with it the esteem of God. The successful man, whose praise is upon the lips of his acquaintance, zealous in good works, honest and upright in his life, foremost among the useful citizens of his town, busy here and there in the affairs of commerce or of letters or of public service, is apt to be contented with himself, and to take it quite for granted that his name is written with adjectives of approbation in the books of God.

Most people whose lot is cast in pleasant places,

who walk up and down in quiet cloisters, reading their books and talking with their friends and studying hard, or who are occupied with affairs and are minding their own business, well-mannered folk and well disposed and well behaved, having fought such victorious engagements with the devil that they have effectually overcome the more gross temptations which beset our life—most people of this reputable kind, among whom we may recognize our own selves, are apt to be of the king's way of thinking.

Let them read what is written in the gospels about the people who were perfectly contented, even to the point of thanking God that they were so particularly good, and yet were quite mistaken.

Let them read what St. Paul said about charity, and see with what a retinue of graces and virtues one may still fall short of the commendation of God.

Let them read the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, where he said that there will be Christian ministers at the day of judgment who have preached sermons which have cast out devils, and in the Lord's name have done great works, —eminent and eloquent persons, pastors of large parishes, leaders of the people,—who will present themselves before the Master, bringing a long catalogue of their good deeds with them, to whom he will say, "I never knew you."

The parable which touched the conscience of the

contented king is meant for us. "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." "Thy servant" was exceeding busy; there were a thousand things to do; every moment was crowded full of occupation; but somehow, in the midst of all this strain and haste,—perhaps even on account of it,—the supreme thing went undone. The man's life was like a foolish clock, having a hand to count the minutes, but no hand to mark the hours. He was idly busy. Who was idly busy? Some of us, it may be, yesterday or the day before.

To be burdened with many cares, to be engaged with many interests, has been the state of man time out of mind. But to be in a hurry is especially characteristic of this present generation. Two new, tremendous forces, steam and electricity, have changed, and are still changing, the conditions of human existence. In business, in professional life, in science, in the mechanical arts, in every direction, in the street and in the school and in the home, old things are passing away and all things are becoming new. The minds of men are strained to keep up with the procession of progress. In the industrial world new inventions and new ideas are enormously increasing the force of competition. In the intellectual world the new discoveries, the new theories, the new methods, and the new books have no end. Even the commonplace is found to contain meanings of which we did not dream. Every day somebody comes along

with a spade, and digs into some familiar hill which we have looked at all our lives, and finds a buried city. We are perplexed by the multitude of our importunate interests. So much there is which we must see or read or know that we are confused and distressed to decide what to do next. Since the world began people have never been so "busy here and there" as we are to-day.

This busy life has its effect upon us in all our enterprises and in all our judgments; in many ways a good effect, but with the inevitable defects of its qualities.

It makes a difference in us as reformers. We are interested in reforms, and are willing and glad in the spirit of service to do our part in establishing the kingdom of heaven; but we are so busy that we fall into impatience; we want results to-morrow. We are sincerely concerned in the welfare of the nation and of the city for a month—until after election. Then we commonly feel that we have done all that we have time for, and we turn from being busy here to being busy there. In the meantime the devil, who is very patient and is also quite well acquainted with human nature, waits a bit until our aggressive enthusiasm is over, and then quietly resumes his infernal operations. One of the most singular facts about the philanthropy of the good Samaritan is his payment of the extra money. He had already done more than his neighbors were disposed to do;

he had taken the wounded man to a place of safety, had given him such medical attention as he could, and had sat up with him all night; and now, in the morning, as he goes away, he not only pays the landlord's bill, but leaves some money in case of further need. The good Samaritan did that good deed all the way through to the end; he finished it. The trouble with the priest and the Levite was that they were too busy.

Our general haste makes a difference in us also as believers. We are interested in the creed. We want to know the everlasting facts. We would find the actual relation between the faith and the truth. We ask many questions; but a good many people are in too much of a hurry to wait for the answers. The explanations are somewhat difficult and tedious and take time, and we have no time. The newest book seems somehow to contradict the oldest doctrine, and we read and doubt; we wonder if perhaps at last the faith has not been shown to be unfounded; and while we read, another book, newest of all, awaits us, and without digesting what we have been studying we go on to that. And by and by the former truth is crowded out —by a process of reasoning? No; by a process of hasty reading, which is quite another thing; for he was not far wrong who declared that reading is the idlest of all human occupations. It is certainly an easy matter to make it a substitute for thinking, and to be portentously busy here

and there amid the book-shelves, while the truth escapes.

I am especially concerned, however, with the influence of an over-busy life upon one's personal religion.

The difficulty to-day, so far as it is peculiar to our own time, is not only that men get so tired during the week that they do not care to go to church on Sunday, but that they are so occupied, so interested, so distracted, so busy, with the surface affairs of life that they do not get time enough to think. No man is easily irreligious, except the man who does not think. The deep problems of God and the great world, of sin and how to be saved out of it, of the soul and its destiny, have beset the heart of man from the beginning, and are escaped only by not thinking. Thus the hurry of our customary life, the multiplicity of its varied interests, the small details,—like the birds which carried off the seed sown by the wayside,—hinder religion.

There was a day when the disciples were so busy that they had not time even to eat. People crowded about them, eager to be taught, begging to be helped and healed. In the midst of it all the Master called them away. They left the multitude behind them, and got into a boat, and rowed across the lake to a place of peace and silence, where there were no people. It must have seemed a strange interruption. They must have felt that

they were missing a great opportunity. In the midst of their busy day they were to stop work.

Jesus knew very well, however, that if they kept on working in that breathless fashion two consequences would inevitably follow. The disciples, having no time to themselves, must presently begin to lose their spiritual strength; that would be the first consequence. To be incessantly busy, even in the errands of religion, tends to make men irreligious; every Christian minister knows how true that is. And then, their own strength being turned to weariness and weakness, their work would go for nothing; that would be the other consequence. Religious service, any sort of personal service, the ministry of soul to soul, makes very deep demands. Especially it demands strong personality. It was therefore necessary, both for the disciples and for their neighbors, that they should not be so busy. They would be better and more useful persons for a little leisure. So would we.

Jesus Christ undertakes the reformation of a planet. The needs of men, the manifold opportunities of service, open before him as no man other than he ever beheld them. The task which confronts him is immeasurable. But he is in no hurry. Quietly, with divine patience, he sets about it in such fashion that we are amazed to see him. Surely he will begin in Jerusalem; he will do miracles to attract a multitude; he will

enter into profitable conference with the rulers of the Jews; he will preach in public places to great congregations; he will agitate and organize. No; he contradicts all maxims of success. He goes out into the country, and sits down on the side of a hill under a green tree, and looks out over the pleasant lake, and talks all day with fishermen. Thus he begins the conquest of the Roman empire. Thus he lays the foundation of the kingdom of God. He neither strives nor cries, nor is his voice heard in the highways. Hours of his time he spends in prayer, going apart by himself upon the mountain or the beach, in the night or in the cool of the dawn.

Jesus Christ did more work than any man who ever labored on this planet, but he was never hurried, never nervous, never over-busy.

We are filled to-day with the spirit of service; we desire to do good and to be of some use in the world. A little while ago the problems which were engaging the attention of intelligent people were mostly problems in theology; they were endeavors to adjust the new truths and the new methods of science to the doctrines in which we were instructed by our fathers. To-day the emphasis of interest is changed. One has but to glance at the reviews, in which the mind of the generation is mirrored, to see what a different spirit is manifest in the table of contents. The present pressing problems are social rather than

scientific. Men are interested not so much in the creed as in the amendment of society. The higher criticism is still being profitably applied to the Bible and the institutions of religion, but we are chiefly concerned to-day in its application to the institutions of the State and of the city, to the conditions of the tenement, the market, and the mill. It is sufficiently established by this time that science is not the enemy, but the ally, of religion. The theologians have proclaimed the end of the contention by adopting the scientific method. Now what we want is to bring this new assurance into vital relation with the needs of men and to translate the creed into the deed.

It takes personality to do that. The study of economics, the investigation of conditions, the establishment of societies and the taking of membership in them, the reading of books—this is all admirable, and much of it is necessary. But it will all amount to nothing, so far as our own part in it is concerned, unless we bring to it not only a disciplined mind and a strong hand, but a heart consecrated to the service of man and filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ. Everything depends on that. Without it our most strenuous endeavors, our most generous expenditure of time, are but the old, ineffective industry of him who was busy here and there, while he missed the supreme purpose of his work.

That strength comes by silence. It grows in

those empty spaces of our time which we rescue by stout self-denial from the distractions of over-many engagements. Moments of quiet reflection, when the noise is all shut out and the soul talks with God; seasons of prayer, when we kneel down in the conscious presence of the Eternal and speak to him whose voice we miss in the whirlwind and the fire of the hurrying enthusiasms of our crowded life, but who brings his counsel and his blessing in the opportunity of silence—these are necessary to him who would have that character which is essential to any fruitful service. From such times the soul comes blessed and ready, as the Master came from the Mount of the Transfiguration, able to cast out the devils which are expelled only by the might of prayer.

To the duty of subtraction must be added the duty of selection.

We ought, indeed, to order our lives so that there may be space in them for quiet and reflection; but we ought further to see to it that the things which we do are worth doing, and that the emphasis is put where it belongs. Success depends upon a right sense of proportion.

The trouble with the man in the prophet's story was that he mistook the relative importance of his various duties. He was drawn in different directions, as we are ourselves, now here, now there. But there was one thing which he was charged to do; there was one thing whose consequence was of

greater moment than that of all the others put together. And he saw the importance of that thing too late. He went about attending to his other duties, and neglected that.

What is it which corresponds to that in our own life? Evidently not the possession of wealth, though there are some who seem to live as if there were nothing else to be desired. And not the possession of knowledge, nor of influence, nor of a high place in the estimation of the passing world; these are excellent, but they do not satisfy. The lawyer is not satisfied, nor the physician, with his professional success; nor the man of letters with his books or with his fame; nor the student with the rewards of divination. There is occupation, there is the consciousness of strength, there is the worthy pleasure of beneficial accomplishment and the flush of victory in these successes, and the man rides in the king's train and is glad. But now and then there comes a voice, like the message of the prophet, to tell the man that while he is busy here and there he is making only a tragic failure of his life.

To be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow his example, to live in his spirit, to love him—this is the supreme thing. There is no real success without it. Is it the supreme thing in your own life? Are you making it the measure of your own success?

THE COMMON TASK.

"Now the man, out of whom the devils were departed, besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee."

The man had been very sick and had been made well. He had been afflicted with that strange malady which is called in the New Testament a possession of the devil. His mind had been affected, and his body; probably his soul also; the fact of sin seems to have entered into the disease. He was in the black depths, suffering all manner of pain, seeking shelter among the tombs in the dark lodgings of the dead, cutting himself there with sharp-edged stones, and screaming at night so that nobody dared to go along the road. Then Jesus came and spoke to him, and he was well. He was like one who in a dream is overtaken by a storm in a wild forest, and is beset by hideous shapes, and wanders along the edge of frightful

cliffs, and of a sudden wakes to find himself in safety, with the morning sun shining in at the windows. The whole world was changed for him, the whole aspect of life was altered. He was a new man.

They who have been grievously sick, so that they have come in sight of death, and have escaped out of pain and weakness into strength and peace and health and life, know how this man felt as he sat at the feet of Jesus, in his right mind. He was very grateful; his heart was full of love.

It sometimes happens that convalescents have short memories. Nine lepers, as they began to recover from their leprosy, were so occupied and interested in making plans for their new future that they went straight on, and gave no further thought to him from whom they had received the gift of health. They looked not back. They were immediately so busy with the affairs of earth that they forgot heaven. That sometimes happens. Out of the sick-room the man or woman whom God has blessed with strength goes into the street, and forgets to be grateful. Life is taken up anew, but not in a new spirit. In the crisis of our trouble, out of the depths of our distress, we call as they did, asking help; and when our prayer is answered we follow in their steps; we go straight on.

It was otherwise with the man of Gadara. He *besought Jesus that he might be with him.* He

wanted to spend all the rest of his days in the warmth and light of that blessed presence.

That was a natural desire. It has entered into the hearts of men in all ages and in all religions. To get away from the turmoil and the trouble, from the importunate alternatives of life, from the questions which we know not how to determine, and the temptations which assault us as we walk abroad, and thus to live in peace, saying our prayers, sitting in the sun by the shadow of the pleasant cloister, delighting beforehand in the sweet rest of heaven—that is what we sometimes think we want. That is what this new disciple wanted.

"But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee." He told him to go; he told him where to go; and he told him what to do when he got there. He was to go away; he was to go home; and he was there to tell his friends how God had blessed him.

"*Jesus sent him away.*" Because it was the will of Jesus that his disciples should be sharers in the common life. He said distinctly that he did not wish to take them out of the world, though he prayed that they might be kept from the evil of it. He himself has set us the example of the Christian life. He lived in cities and knew men; he did not hold himself aloof. He sat at the tables of the rich, so that he was called "a gluttonous man and

a winebibber"; and he made acquaintance with the poor and the miserable, with the people who lived in tenements and those of whom all men spoke evil, so that he was called the "friend of publicans and sinners." He was profoundly interested in human beings. He came to save men, not by withdrawing them from business and society, but by making them better men and women where they were. The purpose of the Christian religion, as Jesus taught it, and as his disciples commonly understood it, until their attention was drawn away to the elaboration of a creed and the construction of a church, was to help the fisherman to be a better fisherman, and the mother to be a better mother, and the merchant, the lawyer, the teacher, the mechanic, to do their work as in the sight of God, with a new motive and a new spirit. Jesus came, not to save the individual alone, but to save society, to save the world. And he sends this new disciple back to take his natural and customary place in the common life.

The man had been a shoemaker or a shopkeeper in Decapolis. He had a house there and his wife and children. The devil, when he got possession of him, took him away. The first thing now was to go back and resume those homely tasks in which, by their very homeliness and nearness to his hand, the will of God for him was shown. He must sit down at his counter or his bench, and sell goods or make shoes. He must take his old place

in the domestic and the social life to which God had called him. To leave these nearest duties all undone, and go off seeking remote and dramatic duties somewhere else, would have contradicted the whole meaning of his discipleship. There were those whom the Master summoned to leave all and follow him, but this man was not one of them. He was one of us. For the new life does not consist in doing new things so much as in doing old things in a new way. The man was one of us, also, in that he did his work henceforth under conditions similar to those of our own experience. For he had the thought of Jesus and the love of him in his heart always, as we have, or wish to have, but Jesus himself he saw not, even as we see not.

Thus sent away, the disciple was directed to his own home. "*Return to thine own house.*" He was to go back to the town where his friends lived, to the place where he was brought up, and where people knew him by his given name. In that place he was to show himself a changed man and a Christian.

That was a hard thing to do. It would have been ever so much easier for the man to have lived his new life in Capernaum or in Jericho, or in any other place where he was a stranger, than in Decapolis, where everybody recognized him in the street and remembered all the foolish and all the evil things that he had ever done. That, how-

ever, was not the worst of it—that handicap of a misspent life, with which he must enter into his new Christian living at Decapolis. The worst thing was that he must maintain his new position in all the informal and unconventional relationships of a familiar and domestic society. For it is easy enough to be good formally and officially, and among those who keep a decent and respectful distance, and in a pulpit. The new disciple must be tested by the commonness of life. He must meet his old friend in the next shop, who has known him since he was a school-boy, and who will address him in a tone of voice suited to such long acquaintance. He must defend himself against such blunt attacks and bantering questions as he would never encounter among strangers, of which the minister, set apart by his position, is commonly ignorant.

Above all, he must be a Christian in his home, where all restraints would be removed, and considerations which would otherwise affect him would have no weight, and he would feel no social obligation to be other than he really was. That is where Christianity is tested. By the daily anxieties, the petty cares, the franknesses and informalities, the manifold trials of patience which beset the life which is lived with others, we are discovered. Out of the church, where it is so easy to be good, out of society, where it is so easy to be pleasant, we return to our own house and we

learn by experience what manner of task it was to which Jesus set the new disciple.

The common task, the nearest duty, it is to this that we are called by our discipleship. Some people are waiting for an opportunity to do a deed of spiritual valor whereby to show that they are very zealous for the Lord God of hosts. They would be the leaders of a reformation or a revolution. Meanwhile the daily duties and the humble virtues go neglected. What the Lord wants is that we undertake the service which lies closest to our hand. That is our part. When we fulfil that we do our appointed and expected share in the work of God.

Jesus comes to set on foot a social revolution which shall overturn the mighty empire which in his day dominates all life. He comes to save the race. And he undertakes it—how? By working year after year in a carpenter-shop, making doors and windows for peasants' houses in a country village; and then by curing sick folk, most of them very poor, of their bodily diseases, and preaching on Saturday mornings, as he is invited, to scanty congregations of unlettered and uninfluential people in small towns, and teaching his truth and his spirit to a little group of fishermen. He knew very well what the errand meant when he told the man of Gadara to go to his own house. He sent him to do that quiet, unhurried, simple, personal, even domestic service which he did himself.

And that is what he wants of us. To take to-day's tasks and to-morrow's,—the transaction of business, the studying of lessons, the care of children, the ordering of the household, the common errands along the common streets, the meeting of the daily opportunities of common life,—to do these faithfully, in the Lord's name, trying to do them in his spirit and to make them useful in his service; this is following the Master's word to the disciple. Nothing else can be so good; nothing else can so satisfy him.

Thus the man goes to his own house, bearing this commission: "*Show how great things God hath done unto thee.*" You see how personal that is. The man may say, "What shall I do, and how shall I set about it? They will ask me a hundred questions. They will perplex me daily with discussions about miracles. They will ask me who it was that healed me, and what I think about him, and what I hold to be the connection between him and the Christ for whom we all are waiting. They will vex me with texts and entangle me in the nets and traps of controversial theology. What shall I answer?" The only thing that Jesus tells the man is this: that his message to the men of his town is to be found in his own experience. He is to stand with the healed blind man, who has but one reply to all the arguments and objections of his adversaries: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

The word of ours that really helps is that which comes out of our own heart and life. St. Paul thanked God that he had been sick, because his pain had given him a new opportunity to be helpful. When he spoke to a man who was in trouble, his own troubles gave him words. He helped that man because the man knew as soon as he began to speak that he was one who really knew what he was talking about. Jesus did not send this new disciple to teach theology, nor to explain the Scriptures, nor to preach sermons, nor to do anything else for which he was untrained and unfitted. He sent him to tell that which he himself had thoroughly learned by his own experience. He had found a friend, and that friend had helped him and healed him and made him a new man, and he could go to others who needed such a friend and show them where to find him.

That is a part of the meaning of the long sickness, and the bitter pain, and the disaster and disappointment, and the darkness of doubt, and the shame of sin. These things come into our lives, and we are sore perplexed; we cannot understand them. They seem to be great hindrances set across our path. We want to do so much, but something happens and we seem to be kept from doing anything. We think sometimes of the service we would render if we were only strong or rich or good. But it may well be that our hard experience, instead of incapacitating us for service, is

but making us the more ready for it. This new disciple, had his life gone on like other lives about him, would have contributed little to the betterment of the neighborhood. When disease and the devil laid hold upon him, it seemed for a time as if he were contributing nothing, or worse than nothing. But now he goes back, out of that time of darkness and distress, and he has a message to his fellow-men. That terrible experience was really a part of his apprenticeship. There he learned sympathy and humility, and man's need of God, and God's ministry to man. He came back better able to understand the temptations and infirmities of his brethren. At last he had got the perspective right, and knew what things were of importance and what were of less importance. And especially his grief and misery had brought him close to Jesus Christ. He might have lived a hundred monotonous and contented years, and have died at the end a blind and dull person whom few would miss, with the world no better for his pleasant living in it. The interruption was worth while. Down he went into the valley of the black shadow that he might learn the way to be a guide to others out of the tangled swamps into the sunlight and the vision of the blessed hills of God. He knew now what the psalmist meant when he wrote, "It is good for me that I have been in trouble."

We, too, are fitted in like fashion for the better

doing of the common task. Out of weakness and humiliation, like this disciple from the tombs of Gadara, we may go in a new way, with a different tone in our voice and a different feeling in our heart, to those who are in need, and can help them as we never could before.

Thus the new disciple is set forth in the gospels to be our example. He went away into the common life, to serve Christ in the Christian fulfilment of his daily duty. He returned to his own house. He ministered to his friends and his neighbors, not of that which he had merely heard from others, nor of that which he had guessed at, but of that which he had himself found to be true in his own experience. In the spirit of Jesus, and in the light of the lessons of his own life, he undertook the common task.

ST. JOHN THE PROPHET.

"WHAT went ye out into the wilderness to see?"

They went to see a prophet. There was a man there who had a message from on high, and they went out to find him.

What is a prophet? The word is commonly taken to mean a foreteller, whose business it is to read the fortune of a nation. It does mean that sometimes. Among the writings of the Bible prophets there are some predictions, but not many. We miss the purpose of those prophetic books by thinking of them as directed wholly, or even mainly, toward the future. No men ever spoke or wrote who stood more closely or more bravely face to face with the living present than the Hebrew prophets. No men were ever busier with the pressing needs and the immediate problems of their time than they.

The prophet, in the right sense of that old word, is a for-teller or a forth-teller, rather than a fore-

teller. He is the man who speaks for God. He is the man who utters forth in living speech the thoughts that burn within his breast.

Prophecy, that is, in the Bible meaning of it, is simply preaching. The last books of the Old Testament are books of sermons. Isaiah and Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea, were the great preachers of their day. They were the Augustines, the Chrysostoms, the Bernards, the Savonarolas, the Luthers, the Wesleys, of their age. They were the men who preached such strong, brave, outspoken, true, effective sermons that people could not forget them. Their messages became part of the national literature, and lived in the hearts and lives of men, and still live. When a sermon is remembered two or three thousand years, we may be sure that it is worth remembering. The ordinary preacher is encouraged if his sermon is remembered over Sunday.

Prophecy is preaching. When St. Paul said, "Despise not prophesyings," he meant "Give heed to sermons." When Jeremy Taylor pleaded for "liberty of prophesying," it was free speech he wanted. When the people crowded out into the Jordan valley to find John the Baptist, they were looking for a preacher.

John the Baptist was a great preacher. His sermons stirred all the land he lived in. Even the Pharisees went out to hear him. The banks of Jordan were filled with eager congregations, who

had come, not to hear the music, but to listen to a man who spoke the words of God. After the sermon people came up to the preacher and asked him to tell them what to do. So that we may be sure that the sermon was a good one. After some sermons people go away saying, "That was very good;" after others they go away saying to themselves, "Am I very good?"

John the Baptist was a notable preacher, who preached even before the king, and told the same homely truth upon that occasion which he was wont to tell, only a little homelier than usual and plainer. He not only preached before the king, but he preached to him and at him, so that for the first time in his life the king heard a real sermon. The soldiers went to hear him, and the shopkeepers, and the common people out of the streets. His congregations, so far as we can get sight of them at this far distance, were made up altogether of men. Women, it is likely, did not care much for him—though I do not count this to his credit.

But all the sermons have long since come to an end; the last congregation of the prophet of the Jordan has gone home—yes, to its long home—these centuries and centuries ago. The words were spoken into the air, and were meant to serve a present and immediate purpose. They were intended simply for the sinners into whose eyes the preacher looked. He would have been amazed out of measure had some prophet of the future told

him that we here, in a country then unheard of and in a year which would have seemed as remote as the day of judgment, would be thinking about him, and that he would be preaching his sermons over again to us. John the Baptist had no notes; he never wrote his sermons; they were never printed. Fragments of them, strong sentences which struck the hearts of the hearers with an impact which made it impossible to forget them, remain in the pages of the gospels, but nothing more. The one sermon of the Baptist's which has been recorded at any length is the sermon of his life.

No sermon is so persuasive as the sermon of a man's life. It is the man himself that counts. Francis of Assisi says one day to a young brother in the monastery, "My son, let us go down into the town and preach." So they go down into the town, the old man and the youth together, and walk about from street to street, turning now this corner and now that, and at last setting their faces toward the monastery again. And the young man says, "Father, when shall we begin to preach?" And Francis answers, "Son, we have been preaching all the time."

The greatest preacher of our generation, whose face in bronze looks down from these walls upon the men of the college which he loved, and whose preaching in this pulpit is one of the memories which consecrate this chapel, said that there are

two elements in every sermon—truth and personality, the message and the man. Often we forget the message, but we remember the man. In the sermons which every one of us is preaching every day, whether we will or not, for God or against him, what we say counts for a great deal, no doubt, but what we are counts for a great deal more.

It was worth while to make a journey into the wilderness, because at the end of the journey there was a true man; there was a prophet sent from God. John the Baptist's sermons, as much of them as has survived, can all be written on one side of a sheet of paper. The best sermon that he preached was the silent sermon of his own life.

One of the lessons of that sermon is the duty and the privilege of belonging, as he did, to the noble army of helpers.

There are plenty of people who are indifferently good, but who are doing next to nothing to make anybody else good. This, it is true, is much better than to be actively bad, but it is very far from being an ideal way of living, and it cannot properly be called Christian. For to be a Christian means to live in the spirit of Jesus and to follow his example. And he never lived like that. To love our brethren, to be concerned for their best welfare, to minister rather than to be ministered unto, every day to be doing something for somebody else, to go about doing good—this is what

it means to live as he did; this is what it is to be a Christian. To be a Christian and to be a helper ought to mean the same thing.

John the Baptist sets us a good example. Things were in a bad way in the world into which he looked, and he took the task of setting them right, so far as he was able, as the natural occupation of a good citizen. The motto of many excellent persons is that which was written over the abbey door in Rabelais: "Fait ce que vouldras"—"Do whatever you please." So long as they are not personally molested, they are content to let their brother do what mischief he sees fit. So long as there is no probability of the establishment of a saloon next door to their own house, they will not trouble themselves about the problem of strong drink.

We are reaping the fruits of that harvest in many of our great cities. Evil grows because so few people seem to care.

John the Baptist could not understand that attitude of mind. Out he came from the deserts, where he had communed with God, and called men to repentance. He set himself against oppression and unrighteousness, even when the sinner sat upon a throne. He died, it is true, by being put to death in a dungeon. That is not an encouraging detail. But he did his work. The world has been better for it ever since. We are helped today by the life which that brave man lived, who

could not be content to let the bad world go on in its own way, unwarned.

We are divided into two great companies, according as we represent the active or the passive conjugation of the verb "to help." The division, it is true, is not a sharp nor exclusive one. Every one of us belongs on both sides of that line of demarcation. Not one of us, I suppose, but is helpful in some way to somebody; and not one of us but needs help, craves help, and gets help every day. The division, however, is a true one. In different lives the emphasis differs: some can be called the helpers, and some the helped; some, for the most part, lead and influence others; some are, for the most part, led and influenced by others. St. John the Baptist was very high up in the noble order of helpers.

Thus he preaches a sermon which we all need to hear. We cannot stand long looking into the face of this helpful man without desiring, as the men did who heard him, to *do* something. We, too, want to help somebody. We begin to ask ourselves, "Am I uplifting, influencing, helping, pushing the world on? Or am I one who must be influenced, led, persuaded, uplifted, pulled along?"

St. John the Baptist is also an example for us, and preaches still, in the fact that he was a man of clear, strong, and definite convictions. What he uttered forth came straight out of his true

heart. No man can convince another unless he is thoroughly convinced himself. Let a man plant himself stoutly upon his own genuine convictions and he may persuade the planet. If we would convert anybody, we will not begin by learning other people's arguments by heart. That would be like David in Saul's armor. It may be very good armor, but it does not fit us. David got along a great deal better with the smooth stones from the little brook and with the sling which he knew how to use. Saul could have done nothing with that homely weapon; he would have quite missed the huge Philistine target. And David could have won no fight with Saul's sharp sword; his own head would most certainly have been cut off with it.

He comes off best in argument, he fights error and evil most victoriously, who is content to be his simple self, and who is therefore the most genuine, the least conventional, the most honest. The only position which we can hold against attack is that in which we thoroughly believe ourselves. That is the only truth to whose acceptance we can persuade our neighbor.

Listen to this brave man as he speaks for God. Not another voice chords with his among all the preachers of his day. Compare him with the popular rabbis. Here is one who belongs to no party. All the ecclesiastical conventionalities of his time he sets aside. He speaks straight out the

plain thoughts that are in him in whatsoever plain words God gives him.

The religious teachers of his people have gone on year after year saying, Rabbi This said this, and Rabbi That said that. Here is one who quotes no rabbis. That is why the crowds go out to hear him, and men cry, "What shall we do?" That is how he is able to convince and convert.

That is what we must do if we would be of help. We must know what we believe and why we believe it; we must be sure of that. And then we must speak, as he did, just what we honestly believe, just what we genuinely feel, and not a syllable besides.

We may take, also, another lesson from the sermon of the prophet's life. He was one of the helpers. That is the first fine thing about him. And he helped because he went about it in such a straightforward, natural, frank, and honest fashion; that is the second lesson from his good example. Notice, now, how lowly he was in his own eyes, taking no thought for himself.

The helper is continually tempted to be acutely conscious of his own helpfulness. The danger of the man with strong convictions is that he may pride himself upon them and despise the weak. The self-made man, it is quaintly said, often worships his maker. Thus there are people of strong convictions who fail to be helpful because they are so disagreeable.

Here we touch the real heart of the greatness of St. John the prophet. He resisted this perilous temptation. He cared for nothing for himself. It is plain to all attentive readers of the gospels that the victory over this hard temptation is one of the chief facts in our Lord's ideal of a man. He that saveth his life makes but a dismal failure of it, while he who does other than that, he that loseth his life, he finds it and is a man, Christ says. And St. John of the Jordan was just that kind of a man.

How anxious he was about his message, and about nothing else! "Who are you?" they questioned, willing to take him for leader and Messiah if he would but say the word. "I am a voice," he answered. "I am the proclaimer of a message. I? I am nothing! I am but the bringer of my Master's errand. Listen! Here it is!" He would take nothing for himself.

By and by, when the new Teacher comes, how gladly does the preacher go into the background! "This is he of whom I spoke—he who is before me, the strings of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose. Behold him!" he cries to his disciples. "Leave me; follow him. He must increase; I must decrease." That was what he wanted. There is nothing in the life of St. John more notable than that.

"Not my good, but my brother's good; not my glory, but my Master's glory." That was the

motto of St. John the prophet. That was the great text to the sermon of his life.

It is a tradition of this pulpit that every year upon this Sunday in Advent, when collect and epistle and gospel have to do with the work of the ministry, there should be preached a sermon upon the call of God to men to-day for that great service. I have had that in my mind all the way through. I have been trying to show, by the example of St. John, what a man of strength and courage and high devotion can do for the glory of God and the betterment of men in the life of the ministry.

The Christian minister to-day is taking again his old place as leader; not by stress of triumphant logic demonstrating an apostolical succession, but rather by actual word and deed and life realizing his relation to the apostles in the community in which he lives. He is the leader because he is the man who leads. People are wonderfully receptive to the proposition of consecrated Christian leadership. They want to be told what they can do for the good of the neighborhood. Whenever the man appears who is a captain in the army of the helpers, and speaks his honest counsel, and declares his genuine conviction, seeking nothing for himself except the privilege of doing good, he finds a welcome.

God wants men to-day who can give their lives to just that service, who will ask themselves, as

they come out from their apprenticeship in the college and undertake their part in the world's work, "Where can I be most and do most?" and who will answer, "Here, in the ministry of Christ." It is worth considering. For some man who hears me to-day it may be the supreme opportunity; to turn away may be to make the great refusal.

MINISTERS OF CHRIST.

"LET a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ."

In the church at Corinth the people criticized the minister. Even St. Paul did not altogether please them. It has ever since been a source of satisfaction and comfort to the clergy, in times of parochial disagreement, to remember that the Corinthians did not hesitate to say of the greatest of the apostles that his letters, indeed, were weighty and powerful, but that his bodily presence was weak, and that his speech was contemptible.

St. Paul declared that he did not mind it. He accounted it a small thing, he said, to be judged by them or by any other men; he looked to the just judgment of the Lord. His frequent references to the matter, however, show that he really cared. It hurt him, as it must hurt any man, to be disliked and misunderstood. Accordingly, he writes about it to the Corinthians, and is at pains

to defend himself against some of their criticisms. And just here, where these words are written, he tries to give them a true standard by which they may rightly judge him and likewise all other ministers of God: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ."

St. Paul knew that it matters much what the people think about the minister. It affects them in their relation to his ministry, making them receptive less or more to its influence. And it affects him. For their sake, and for his also, St. Paul felt it to be important that the Christian church should have a right conception of the purpose and the work of the Christian minister.

That the priest has much to do with the character of the parish is evident enough. The peace of the parish depends upon him, and its spiritual prosperity is largely determined by him. When a new minister is called, one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is answered—not always in the affirmative; the coming of the kingdom of God in that parish waits upon the pastor. On the other hand, it is equally true, and not so frequently considered, that the parish influences the minister.

It is sometimes said that every country has just the government which it deserves. The statement is not quite so true of parishes. Yet it is certain that a worldly parish will in course of time alter the point of view of the parish priest. He may,

by reason of the greater need, grow more strong and stern in his preaching, like the old prophets. It is plain, however, that he will be terribly tempted to set his face in the other direction; to say that which he thinks will please; to modify the hard words of the message with which he was intrusted, that they may enter more gently into the polite ears of his people; and somehow to bring his faith and their amused unfaith into social agreement. That has sometimes been the result. The parson has become as worldly as the congregation. Fortunately, it is as often true that the parish which expects much gets much. Every Christian minister knows by blessed experience the help and strength that come from the confidence of the people. He is not half as good as they think, but he wants to be. He goes about among them, and is ashamed to find himself so far below not only their ideal of him, but their own example. He prays that he may better deserve their reverence and their love.

Thus it is important that the people have a right and high conception of the Christian ministry. Great as is the effect of such a conception upon the pastor in the midst of his work, it has even more to do with his initial choice. It largely determines the kind of men who offer themselves for ordination. If the priest's work is considered to be commonplace and easy; if it is thought to consist of routine and dull reading, of the com-

position of sermons in which there is more of literature than of religion, and which come out of the educated mind rather than out of the consecrated heart, and of the conduct of beautiful services, with flowers and fine attire; if it is thought of as a life lived pleasantly apart from the heavy burdens, the imperious alternatives, the coarse tasks, the uncertainties, and the stern responsibilities which beset the generality of men—then they will naturally seek to get into it who are fit for nothing else. Let the young men of quick wit and enterprise and energy become lawyers and physicians and engineers and merchants, and out of the dull fellows at the other end of the class select the parsons. But if the priest is called of God and follows in the steps of Jesus Christ; if he comes, not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life for the good of the community; if he is really—as he used to be called—the "parson," the person of the place, so that he belongs, not to the passive and patient, but to the aggressive and progressive company of the host of God, and is the leader of the people's better life; if his Master's words are in his heart, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you"; if the world waits for him, that he may undertake, in the light of the face of Jesus Christ, to solve the serious problems of his generation—then will an altogether different man be seen coming up out of the congregation to the pulpit

and the altar. For it is true, by warrant of many large volumes of history, that the task determines the man. When the opportunity is great, when the burden is big as a giant's load, when the task is grievous, when the right is in retreat, then the man appears, coming, like David, from the most unexpected places; and the Lord's work goes on.

It is said by philosophers who put scant confidence in our enthusiastic schemes for social betterment that our millennium will prove to be impossible, because it makes no place for the incentive of gain. Men, they say, must be rewarded; they must be given money and stone houses, and must have their names in the newspapers. Without these substantial invitations they will dwell at ease. But in the name of human nature, in the name of the sons of men, who are God's sons also, we deny it. The open opportunity, the recognized relation between the stout arm and the heavy burden, the joy of effort, offer an eternal attraction. The records of the heroes and the martyrs prove it. Against the incentive of gain we set the spirit of service. It is the hope of the ministry.

Accordingly, St. Paul, speaking for himself and his companions, asks that they be thought of as the ministers of Christ. And it is of much importance to the minister himself, and to the people, whose ideals of the ministry tend so strongly to shape themselves in the life of their

minister, and to all strong young souls who are considering to-day how they may best employ their strength, that the name be understood.

I take only the two ideas which are obviously suggested by the phrase itself.

The first of these is that the Christian minister comes upon a mission of ministry. It is his particular business to make the world better. We are all, indeed, charged with the same duty, but the minister has nothing else to do. Other people have their livelihood to earn and must spend much time in occupations whose relation to the kingdom of God seems more or less remote. The minister is supported by his people that he may be free to devote his whole time and energy and thought to the welfare of the neighborhood. They look after him in order that he may look after them.

Thus the condition of the community is upon his conscience. He must make himself acquainted with it, so that he knows its needs and its possibilities. It must lie before him like a campaign map, with the position and the strength of the forces of the enemy plainly marked upon it. All that concerns its welfare, whether of soul or mind or body, belongs to his department. The street as well as the sanctuary, the polls as well as the pulpit, the shop as well as the pew—these are within his province; and the whole week is his.

The idea that any part of human life is secular,

so that religion has no business in it, or that the work of the Christian minister has to do with heaven rather than with earth, is denied by every day of the life of Jesus Christ, and sets at naught the prayer that he taught us—that God's will may be done, even as it is in heaven, here and now.

The worth of the sermon is to be measured, not by the attention with which it is heard, but by the effect which it has upon the aspiration of the neighborhood. The service is to be estimated, like the public road, as a means of access whereby God and the soul meet. The industries of the parish, its various societies, are to be its hands, reaching out in help and welcome to the community. At the heart of it, allied with all good causes, set against the devil, forever translating opportunity into benediction, is the Christian minister. Into the midst of the manifold sorrows of men he comes with comfort. He teaches the weak how to be strong. It is true of him, as it was of his Master,—and the fact is the credential of his mission,—that by his word "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." The deep clefts which run across the surface of society, dividing between the palace and the tenement, between the privileged and the unprivileged, between the master and the man, he of all men is in the best position to fill up or

bridge. He is the apostle of brotherhood and the herald of the kingdom of heaven.

And all this in the name of Jesus Christ. That is the other essential element in the right conception of the Christian ministry. It is the ministry of Christ.

The spirit of service is taking possession of society. Selfishness is no longer respectable. To be interested in the uplifting of the community, and in some measure to be assisting in that perpendicular task, is accounted both a natural and a necessary part of life by an increasing number of good people. The time has gone by when society, like the priest in the parable, could quietly and with a contented conscience take the other side of the road. People are busy upon the errands of ministry.

What is wanted now is that this ministry shall be undertaken in a right spirit, in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Philanthropy at present is intent upon two kinds of problems: those which concern the body, and those which concern the mind. Some say that the thing to do is to change men's surroundings; to put them into a clean neighborhood, and give them better homes and better wages, and see that they are fed and clad; and that is indeed of very great importance. Others say that people must be taught; they must have their minds improved; they must be made responsive to a wider

range of aspirations and ideas; they must be interested in more things that are worth while; they must learn the precepts of a higher morality. That too is tremendously important. But when all this is undertaken, when we are busiest with our problems in ethics and our problems in philanthropy, the Christian minister stands up to say that we have not yet got sight of the real thing. We have not touched the man. The body is not the man; the mind is not the man. Whoever would find him must address the heart. When the man's affections change the man is changed indeed. He must be born again in order to enter the new life. Carpets and curtains make some difference, and the ten commandments make more difference; but that which is essential is the spiritual impulse of religion. The supreme thing is not a new coat, nor even a new thought, but a new heart. And God alone can give that, through Jesus Christ.

This, then, is the Christian minister's contribution to the work of social betterment. He may be a student of social questions, so that he may be able to discuss the propositions of reformers. He may organize a parish upon such social lines, with such a zeal for social service and such immediate opportunities of personal ministry that he may himself be a reformer. He may take his part in the improvement of the town, in the abolition of the slums, in the settlement of the mis-

understandings of the master and the man. Let him, by all means, do these things if he can, if he has the knowledge, and the task invites him. But his nearest duty, his own especial mission, his highest work, the thing that he is sent to do, the thing he ought to live for, is to realize in himself and in his people the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is to uphold in this noisy world the spiritual side of life. He is to be a man of prayer. He is to keep close to his Master.

The Christian minister is the minister of Christ. To make Christ real to men, to bring them into acquaintance and fraternity with him, to make them know him so that they will love him, and to make them love him so that they will shape their lives after the pattern of his life—that is his purpose; that is what he is for. No other influence will avail to do men lasting good. They must be helped at heart. Jesus Christ alone is the refuge in sorrow, the strength in temptation, the way, the truth, and the life, the Saviour of society. To be his faithful minister is the highest, the most useful, the most responsible, the most blessed life that any man can live.

FRATERNAL RELIGION.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon."

He had received a blessing. He had learned a wonderful new lesson in the book of life. You know who Andrew was. He was a religious fisherman. Fishing is a meditative occupation; it is an exercise in the art of patient waiting. Andrew had time to think. He was a plain man, not a scholar, not accustomed to society, not rich, and with but small confidence in his own ability; but he had done a deal of quiet thinking. Day by day and night by night, between the water and the sky, he had pondered the eternal problems, and had discussed them with other fisherfolk, his brethren and acquaintance.

Thus it was that he came into the presence of Jesus Christ, and knew him when he saw him. For blessings do not fall down by happy chance out of the sky, but grow in the common ground from seeds of our own planting. They depend upon our own readiness to receive them, and that

depends upon the way in which we met the opportunities of the day before yesterday and of the day before that; so that it is possible to trace our richest blessings back and back until we see how they were related long ago to the doing of some humble duty. That we did, and this and that and the other followed in consequence, like the web of Andrew's net, and thus we gained a friend or learned a truth, and the whole purpose and meaning and direction of our life was altered and deepened.

That was what made Andrew different from many other men. They looked, as he did, into the face of Jesus Christ and heard him speak, but they did not recognize him, and they went about their business unheeding and unhelped. But Andrew saw him, and immediately the experiences of the past, the long thoughts while the sail flopped against the mast and the net hung empty by the boat's side, the eager talk with John and James and Peter over things worth discussing, the prayers and aspirations of all the years of Andrew's life, interpreted the Master's words. The fisherman knew what he meant. Here at last the saint, the prophet, the spiritual hero of his dreams, stood in flesh-and-blood reality before him. Andrew could not mistake him; he had been looking for him all his life.

What I want, however, to emphasize especially is that which followed. The blessing comes, the

light shines, the hand of the new friend meets his hand: Andrew has found the Christ. What does he do then? At once there is presented to him the everlasting alternative between the personal and the fraternal element in religion. Shall he come to Christ and be content? Shall he follow him, and accept his gracious invitation to his house, and sit there at his feet attending to his blessed words, with his heart warm and his eyes beholding heaven open, and stay there satisfied? Shall that be the end of it? Or shall he share the blessing? Shall he go and find his brother?

It is an alternative which runs a line of spiritual division through society. It divides between the passive and the active—between those who are contributing to the general welfare and those who are contributing nothing.

All the privileged people who are content simply to enjoy their abundant blessings belong on the wrong side. They are richer than their neighbors, —some of them in the possession of money, some in culture, taste, education, gifts of leadership, some in leisure, some in the wealth of happiness, —and they are sitting down in satisfied seclusion and devoutly thanking God that they are different from other people. Their pleasant houses, their books and pictures, the gentle influences of their sheltered lives, are for themselves. They are God's stewards, holding these privileges in trust for him, charged by him to minister to their

neighbors, and ministering instead to their own pleasure. They have taken God's money and put it to their own account. And God says to them as he said to the privileged people of a former time who were in the same offense, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Let them bring their lives to the test of comparison with the ideal life: can they imagine Jesus Christ living as they do?

Some of them are accounted Christian people. They are diligent and devout attendants at the services of the Christian church, and enjoy them, and get unfeigned satisfaction and spiritual uplift from them; they delight in prayer, and are seen kneeling in still sanctuaries in the conscious presence of God. Religion means a great deal to them and fills a great space in their lives. They are good people, kindly and patient and pure-minded and honest; but they stand, nevertheless, on the wrong side of the division line. Theirs is an incomplete religion. It is fine and true and worthy of the approbation of men and God—as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. They are Christian Epicureans, with their senses and their minds and their hearts open to all high experience, but with the emphasis of their lives set upon the receptive side. They reverse the saying of the Master when he declared that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

They are Christians individually, but not fraternally. They lack the supreme and saving element of service: they are content to be Christians all alone; they are doing nothing to make their neighbors Christian. They are occupied in the task of saving their own lives, forgetting the great word that only he who loses his life, who puts self last and serves his neighbor first, shall save it.

Peter and James and John are with the Master on the Transfiguration Hill. Heaven opens, and wise and holy men of old meet with them; the restless, hurrying, unspiritual world, full of distraction and temptation, full of hindrance and hostility, is beneath them, hidden from their sight; and Jesus is beside them, and God speaks. It is a blessed place. They want to stay. They want to have that celestial moment last forever. They would build houses on that heavenly hilltop and live there. But you know what happens. Jesus takes them straight down out of the place of vision into the world of need and service. The glory and the blessing and the sight of heaven's gate are not to stand alone and make the sum and goal of life; the men, with hearts enkindled and faith strengthened, are to go back to the common task. They are to take up again the work of ministry. They have been brought close to God; now they are to go and find their brother and bring him.

So again at the great feast of Pentecost. There are the faithful people, the little flock of true disciples, met in the upper room, and the Holy Spirit comes. God is audibly and visibly and blessedly manifest among them. What a place to stay in! What a time for contemplation and devout delight and sweet content, for kneeling upon bended knees, with folded hands and shut eyes and hearts uplifted! But you know that immediately they went downstairs into the street. That is one of the most remarkable of all the extraordinary happenings of that great day. There is no attention given to it in the record; it is taken quite as a matter of course, and is chronicled without adjective or adverb or syllable of comment. But think of it! They left it all—the rushing, mighty wind, the tongues of fire, the revealed presence of the Eternal—and went down into the common daylight of the public street, went down to where the crowd stood at the door, and preached. That, you see, completed that religious experience. It conformed the day to God's ideal of a Christian day. The passive was translated into the active; they who had been ministered unto began to minister; they to whom God had given gave in turn; the vision was followed by the task. The first motion, the first thought, of these good people was to share this wonderful new blessing with somebody else.

The alternative between the personal and the

fraternal emphasis in the religious life is put into the fewest words in the account of the man whom Jesus Christ had healed, and who desired, the record says, that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, telling him to go home and teach his friends and his neighbors the great new truth and life that filled his heart. He wanted to be with him; it was the most natural wish in the world. In every Christian century and country it has sent men and women into monasteries. In every Christian congregation it is the strong desire of some sincerely religious souls. But it cannot be granted; it cannot be permitted to be the whole of life. Jesus sent the man away; he was always sending men away, that they might teach what they had learned.

You see how this belongs to Andrew's story. The new disciple does not hesitate; he first finds his brother. He cannot rest till he has told the news. That, you know, is what the gospel means; the word means news—good news. Andrew cannot keep it to himself; he hurries out and finds his brother.

They who are good Christians are trying to follow that example, and to live the fraternal Christian life.

These people are not content to be contented. They have found the Christ themselves and have given him their hearts, and in testimony of their love they would bring others to him. Jesus

Christ is very real to them, and very precious. He has saved them, and they know that he can save their brethren. What shall a man do in a neighborhood of sick people, when he has found a physician who has treated him for the same malady from which they suffer, and has made him well? Shall he give thanks for his own recovery, and sit down serenely to the enjoyment of his own health? The good Christian cannot understand that attitude of mind. No, he says; the man, if he feels any real gratitude, if he has any brotherly love in him, must go into the street and into the houses of his neighbors, that he may tell them what has been done for his body; he may not rest until he has disclosed his saving secret.

Is it not the Christian spirit? In a world stricken with the malady of sin, where the sick at heart seek now this physician and now that, and get no good, is it not the Christian thing to do as Andrew did?

Andrew was a layman. It is likely that his word had greater power by reason of the informality of his position. He wore no uniform, spoke in no professional voice, stood in no high pulpit, had no ecclesiastical ends to serve; he was just a plain, every-day business man, like his neighbors. They knew him well. Why, they had been fishing with him time and time again. There was no separation between him and them.

The layman has an opportunity which the clergyman would like to have, but for which commonly he seeks in vain—the opportunity in a natural way, as man with man, unconventionally, with no sort of reservation, to speak of the everlasting realities. Men are interested—how can they live in this world of birth and death and not be interested?—in the great problems of the race, in the truths that touch the soul. But when the parson comes, unless they already know him very well, they look the other way. Certain it is that the world will never be saved by the unassisted ministrations of the ministry. The kingdom of heaven will wait a long time if it tarries till the parsons get the gates open. What we want is men like Andrew, and many of them, filled with the spirit of service, earnestly desirous to share with others the peace and spiritual joy and strength which they have found, on the alert to speak a word in season.

See how directly Andrew speaks. He wastes no words, he studies no strategic methods of approach, he has no preface of apology. Straight he goes, and looks his brother in the face, and tells the thought that stirs his heart. We are in danger of getting the notion that people must somehow be amused into the kingdom of heaven. They must be brought into the church by the side door of the parish house. First the gymnasium, and then the club, and then the Sunday evening

lecture and the Sunday morning music, and by and by the font and the altar; these are the stages of the new road out of darkness into light. And it is true, indeed, that religion has a vital relation to every phase of life, and that the Christian ought to be sympathetically interested in every wholesome interest of man, and that he who would take up Andrew's commission to catch men must use such bait as serves his purpose.

But it must not be forgotten that the supreme thing is the allegiance of the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we want. The attractions, the organizations, the varied industries of parish life, are of value in proportion as they minister to that. The progress of religion can no more be measured by the size of the congregation than a political election can be determined by the applause of an audience. The only fish that Andrew counted were the fish that he caught.

And when it comes to winning men, the word that really tells is the straight word, spoken plainly, directly, bluntly, if you will, but in all honesty and to the point, without subterfuge or hesitation. It is a mistake to think that men and women do not like to be spoken to in a natural tone of voice and in the language of the common day upon the subject of religion.

Andrew was no theologian. He was no better qualified by education, by position, by character, or by experience to be a religious teacher than

we are. He was not nearly so well qualified as some of us. We must not imagine, because we write the title "saint" before his name, that he was different from us. He was quite of our own kind, an imperfect Christian, having ideals, but seeing them afar off through a telescope, liable, like us, to be defeated by temptation, apt to be perplexed when people asked him questions. All that he attempts to do when he finds his brother is to bring him into the presence of the supreme Teacher. He stands in the vestibule rather than in the pulpit of the church, and does an usher's work. "Come," he says, "that he who has helped me may help you also." Is there any Christian who cannot do as much as that? Is it so hard to say to some one whom you know, "Come with me to-day, that you may at least try that which has done good to my soul"?

Thus Andrew goes and gets one man; and so the Christian church begins, and has gone on growing ever since, by the might of this quiet, fraternal, personal service. Peter presently preaches sermons which stir the hearts of multitudes, but the sermon which touched the heart of Peter was spoken in private by his brother Andrew. By personal service, by fraternal religion, by the earnest speech of one man to another, shall the world be won to the allegiance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SIMON PETER TWICE.

SIMON PETER went a-fishing in the Lake of Galilee a great many times. That was his business. Twice he had a remarkable experience. After a long space of fruitless labor and vain waiting, casting the net on this side and on that and catching nothing, suddenly such a great haul of fish fell to his lot that his boat could not contain them. The same thing happened twice, with a three year's interval between. The chief difference in the two events is to be seen in the fisherman's behavior.

Upon the first occasion it is said of him: "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He desired that Jesus Christ, who had wrought this wonder, should be as far away from him as possible. But the next time his instinctive impulse is altogether different: "When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he cast himself into the sea." Peter was in a boat; Jesus was on the shore. Peter wanted to get as near to Jesus as he could, and as soon as he could.

The same shores meet the water, the same hills shine in the distance, the same company is in the boats, the same Christ speaks the word, and the same result follows; the difference is in Peter. The first time the instant thought in the apostle's mind is fear. Down he gets upon his knees and prays a panic-stricken prayer—"Depart from me!" The second time the impulse is not fear, but love. Instead of wishing distance now between the Master and himself, he cannot wait till the distance is lessened by the slow rowing. Straight he plunges into the water and swims ashore.

That is not at all what we might have expected. If Simon Peter was afraid before, there were added reasons for fear now. Before he saw in Jesus only a very holy man, possessed of a singular power over the world of nature, able to make the fishes do his will, but still a man, no more than a man. It is quite unlikely that any idea of the divinity of Christ had at that time entered into Simon Peter's mind. The simple holiness of this saintly man, and the element of strange power in him shown by the miracle, made the modest fisherman vividly and unpleasantly conscious of his own manifold imperfections. He was ashamed and afraid. A rough fellow such as he, how could he have the face to sit familiarly in such a presence?

But on the occasion of the second miracle there

stood in the dim light yonder on the beach One who was more than man. That strange Being who spoke out of the mist of the early morning to the men in the boat had come up out of his grave to walk the earth. He had died upon the cross. There had been nails in his hands and in his feet, and a spear had pierced his side. He had been dead, and they had buried him. And there he was standing on the shore and speaking. There was reason enough for fear, and for falling down on trembling knees, that second time. And that confession, "I am a sinful man, O Lord," Simon Peter may properly repeat with tears. He who waited on the beach had stood in the high priest's house, beset with enemies, and listened to the voice of this disciple as he thrice denied him and disowned him, once with an oath, breaking out into curses, swearing that he was no friend of his. Peter might well pray for distance.

And yet the heart of Peter was full of love and confidence.

Plainly the man was changed. What was it that had changed him? We look the record over, and note the three years' interval. Three years' time is long enough to make a change in any man. Alas for any human being in whom the passing of three years marks no amendment! These three years, we discover, had been spent in the company of Jesus Christ. For three years Simon Peter had stood beside the Master as he

did his deeds of mercy, had listened to his words of grace and wisdom, had journeyed with him over the roads and fields of Syria, Jesus and Peter taking walks together, and talking as they went. He had been a witness of his daily intercourse with men, and had seen him at his prayers. He had been with him in privation and temptation, in weariness and disappointment, when all were turned against him, and had become acquainted with his love and sympathy, with the justice of his judgment, with his spirit of service, with his unreserved self-sacrifice. Simon Peter for three years had lived with Jesus Christ. He had come to know Christ; and that made all the difference in the world. That made him love Christ and long to be near him, sure of Christ's love for him, sinful as he was. Fear had been driven out by the new love which entered by knowing Christ.

What is it to know Christ? There is nothing difficult about it. To know him does not mean to know theology. We may be sadly ignorant of many dogmas, and quite mistaken about many others, and yet know Christ to our soul's health. There is no essential connection between metaphysics and salvation. The simplest of us, though we were unlettered as the fishermen of Galilee, may know Christ even as they knew him.

He has been misrepresented; hindrances have been set between him and the soul. Men have insisted that he must be theologically discerned.

They have drawn conventional pictures of him, that are no more like him than the glass Christ of the church window, and have insisted that unless our idea of him matches these angular outlines, measure for measure, we have some other than the real Christ.

But the real Christ is the Christ of the gospels. Scholars talk about the Christ of to-day, but what they mean is not that there is some ideal Christ, somehow incarnate in humanity, different from the Christ of Nazareth, and better and greater than he; only that as man grows, and the Holy Spirit teaches the race in the lessons of experience, our understanding of the Christ of the gospels grows, so that his words mean more than once they seemed to mean, and his life is closer to our life. Jesus of Nazareth is still wiser than the wisest and better than the best. He is the only Christ we know.

And to know him we must close the text-books and look into his own face. He walked along the dusty roads of this familiar earth on which we live, and dwelt here as intimately as any saint or hero of all history—a real man, of real flesh and blood, who loved his friends as we do, only better. We do not begin to realize it. We think of him in the embroidered vestments of the pictures with haloed head. We remove him into a shadowy distance. We see him through a mist more dense than was about him that early dawn beside the

lake, when Peter heard his voice. We miss the sweet unconventionality of the gospels. After no such unreal fashion, and in no ecclesiastical or theological way, did Simon Peter know him. It was no such knowledge which made the change in Simon Peter's life.

One of these experiences of Peter belongs also to us. Which one? That depends upon our knowledge of the Master. If the thought of Jesus serves but to render us uncomfortable, so that we want to get away from the hearing of his voice, then we are like the apostle at the first. If, whenever the deeper aspects of religion are brought before us, we experience an indefinable sensation of disquiet, and yet have a longing at the same time for the happiness of holiness; if we envy some to whom Christ seems very near, and heaven open, and prayer a privilege, and faith is translated into certainty, but we hold back; if we desire to be something better than a conventional Christian, and yet shrink from committing ourselves to the realities of religion, and we think of our misdoings, and feel that we must somehow rid ourselves of them if we would approach Christ, and feel, too, that we are making little progress in that good riddance, and are dissatisfied and ill at ease, and sometimes even afraid--the trouble is that we do not know Christ.

In the three years between the two miracles Simon Peter had come into that blessed know-

ledge. And when he saw him on the shore in the dim morning, his heart was full of joy, as ours is at the sight of a friend. There was his Friend. There was one whom he knew, and whom by reason of that knowledge he loved to the very depths of his soul. And he cast himself into the sea and swam ashore.

In measure as we know Christ, we also will delight in closeness to him. We will come to him with all our sins, that he may forgive us and counsel us and help us, and with all our needs and plans. We will read the pages of the gospels over and over, that we may live with him as Peter did. We will kneel in the still church, where the faithful are gathered in his name, remembering and realizing his promised presence. We will approach the blessed sacrament of his body and his blood, that he may dwell in us and we in him. Because we know him we will love him, and because we love him we will serve him.

For to know Christ is the condition of spiritual growth. In one sense spiritual growth and knowledge of Christ are very much the same thing. We cannot know him without growing spiritually; knowledge and growth thus act and react one upon the other. The more we know Christ the more we will grow in grace, and the more we grow in grace the better able we will be to know Christ.

To know Christ is to know the heart of ethics

and theology, to be acquainted with their essential principles and meanings. Christianity is not a system of ethics; it is not a system of theology; it is not a system of anything. Christianity is a personal religion. The secret and substance of it is not in a creed, nor in a book, but in a life.

To know Christ is the way to grow in faith. There is no permanent and availing defense of the Christian religion to be constructed out of syllogisms or arguments or evidences. The proof of it is in the character of Jesus Christ. Was he divine, or not? You must look for the answer in your own heart. Do you not know? And then everything else follows after. We believe in Jesus Christ, and so we believe in the religion of Jesus Christ.

To know Christ is the way to grow in holiness. Christianity is not a religion of rules. It is the religion of the divine example. Try to follow the blessed steps of the most holy life. Take his advice. Ask yourself, in the moment of perplexity or temptation, What would he do if he were here? Nothing else will so surely lead us into the way of holy living.

To know Christ—you see how it helped Peter. The fisherman became a saint. You see how Peter loved him and longed to be near him. That will be our mind also in proportion as we know him. Our whole attitude toward religion will be changed,

as his was. Prayers and sacraments, meditation and devotion, church attendance, religious conversation, spiritual reading—these will take a new place in our lives, and be real, and bring us grace and blessing.

The trouble is that we read and study many things, while the gospels, in whose pages we may walk and talk with Jesus Christ, are often either left unread, or are read conventionally, with little interest, and as a pious task. And thus we miss the best of life. Thus we keep upon the surface only, and do not see what deep meanings lie beneath. Thus the trivial is set before that which is of most account, and the transitory is preferred to the eternal. Thus went the world in that old day when Jesus had his residence among us; people were perplexed and anxious and interested and busy about many things. They were selling goods and reading books and building houses, and determining what pleasant or profitable things to do next week, hurrying about from one errand to another, and passing Jesus Christ in the street without knowing him. In the meantime St. Peter was living with him. We may do the same.

There were a great many things which Peter did not know; but he knew Christ, and that changed Peter; it transformed him into an apostle. A whole new world was opened wide for Simon Peter. The door of it still stands ajar for us.

THE INTERPRETIVE VALUE OF OBEDIENCE.

"ALL the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies."

It seems at first to mean that the Lord is merciful and faithful to such as do his will. They shall have his blessing. As they deal with him so will he deal with them. There is a covenant, a spiritual contract, between them—on the one hand so much obedience and loyalty, and on the other so much truth and mercy. Such as keep the covenant shall find the paths of the Lord straight and smooth before their feet.

The conception of God implied in such a compact is drawn from the transactions of the market, and in its lowest terms puts religion upon the level of mere sale and barter. There is, indeed, an element of truth in it, "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There are re-

wards of God. It is certain, however, that they will miss them altogether who work just for the reward. The true reward is the approval of God, and they alone will gain it who think more of God than of themselves. This is the distinction which is made in the New Testament between faith and works. Works, in this sense, are things done simply for wages, expecting that God will pay us for being good; while the life of faith is that in which the good works are done for the sake of God by those who love him, looking for no return.

The difference between the two ideas is seen by comparing the bargain of Jacob with the devout thought of a familiar hymn of St. Francis Xavier's. Jacob makes a trader's agreement with God. He vows a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God." But the Christian saint gives everything and asks nothing.

"My God, I love thee, not because
I hope for heaven thereby;
Nor yet because, if I love not,
I must forever die.

. . . . .

"Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward;
But as thyself hast loved me,
O ever-loving Lord!"

The psalm from which the text is taken was written a long time ago; it would not be strange if, from the Christian point of view, it should be found defective. It may be intended to express that commercial conception of religion which is so natural and strong in the hearts of our shop-keeping race. To-day it underlies the offering of sacrifices and the observance of ceremonies in all non-Christian lands, and even tempts us Christians to regard the keeping of the commandments as an approach to the good will of the mysterious Power in whose hand is the dispensation of prosperity. We would do better to sympathize with the infirmity of the psalmist than to blame him.

I do not believe, however, that the text teaches that we are to obey God in order that he may be merciful and true to us. The meaning, I take it, is rather that those who obey him are thereby enabled to understand his ways, and to see, even when the paths of the Lord are blind and steep, that they are, nevertheless, the paths of mercy and of truth. They who keep the covenant and the testimonies of God have their eyes opened to know the purpose and the motive of the acts of God. That is what the psalmist says.

For the words occur in connection with others which deal with the instructions of God. Just before, it is written, "Them that are meek shall he guide in judgment: and such as are gentle,

them shall he learn his way;" and presently we read, "What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose;" and, "The secret of the Lord is among them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." That is the meaning of it. The secret of the Lord, the understanding of his strange dealings with us, is open and plain to those who are near to him, who fear him with the fear of devout reverence and obey him in the keeping of his covenant and his testimonies.

Thus the text teaches the interpretive value of obedience. And that is the subject of this sermon.

We want to understand God. We want to know what God means. It is written with devout audacity in another psalm that one of the satisfactions of the day of judgment will be the acquittal of God: "That thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged." Sometime the justice and the love of God will be established, and we will know that all that he did was right and best. The more evident blessings of God, too, we wish to understand better. The manifold bounties and benefactions with which he surrounds our lives, the beauties and delights of the natural world about us, the countless opportunities of life—we need to appreciate them in order to receive the blessing which they bring. It is only by the gateway of appreciation that they become a part of our personal possessions and in-

crease our individual happiness. God daily and hourly speaks to us in all these ways, and we want to know what he says.

And the teaching of the text is that the grammar of the language in which the messages of God are written is obedience. We must obey in order to appreciate, in order to understand. We must keep the covenant and the testimonies of the Lord, then shall the mercy and the truth with which he attends us be made manifest.

This is plain enough in our relation to the world of nature. How shall we come into complete harmony of eye and ear and touch with our environment; how shall we see the "desirable, clear light of the new morning," and listen fitly to the music of the brooks; how shall we so conduct ourselves that the sun and the rain, the clouds and trees and stars, the sights and sounds of nature, shall give us the satisfaction and the benediction which God intends? The way is as evident as it is simple and homely: we must keep the covenant and the testimonies of God as they relate to our daily health of body; we must sleep and eat and work aright; we must answer the fitting, natural demands of our physical being, and keep ourselves alert and strong and well. Nothing else will avail. No amount of beautiful poetry read by lamplight, and no prayers said behind closed doors, can take the place of that imperative obedience to the primitive laws of bodily health by which alone we may

hope to look through clear eyes upon this fair and wonderful world.

This everlasting fact of the interpretive value of obedience holds true in religion, as it does in everything else. The Bible is never weary of teaching it. It is one of the eternal principles that lie at the heart of spiritual truth.

The ten lepers who are cleansed as they obey are representatives of all of us: as we go along the way on which God sends us, strength and health of soul go with us. Thus it is that Jesus promises that the pure in heart shall see God. They who are devoted to God, who hold all else subordinate to their service of him, whose love of him is the supreme fact in their lives, who live in his conscious presence, see him and understand him. It is as simple and natural as friendship. Their obedience opens their eyes.

It is noticeable that Jesus made marked distinctions among men. Out of a multitude he chose a few, to whom he spoke more often and intimately, to whom he revealed himself more openly; and out of these few he selected an inner group of especially sympathetic souls, whom he chose to attend him when he did certain of his miracles, and whom he took with him to behold his glory in the Mount of the Transfiguration, and to give him the strength and comfort of their presence in his sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane. This choice he made in no arbitrary way, but on the

principle of spiritual affinity. These men understood him better than the others. They were nearer to him than the others. Therefore he could speak freely, and give them that which they only could receive.

Everybody knows how that is. There are those who are of intellectual or temperamental or spiritual kinship with us, whom we recognize by a kind of instinct when we first see them, to whom our hearts go out in welcome, and to whom we speak gladly and without constraint, and of the best that is in us. We know them better in a day than we could know others in a whole lifetime. The secret of it is that we have the same ideals; we are trying to keep the same intellectual or spiritual covenant and testimony. So it was with the chosen disciples of Jesus; they were able to understand him better than the crowd, because they were keeping, as best they could, though with many blunders, the eternal laws which expressed his own will and way. Many turned from him puzzled and offended, finding nothing in him, thoroughly misunderstanding him; these few heard him speak the words of eternal life. He was interpreted to them by their obedience.

We too, if we would know him, must approach him by this way. Not by the path of reason, perplexing ourselves among the arguments of theologians, some saying this about him and some that, entangling us in the net of ancient contro-

versy or choking us with the ashes of burnt-out fires; and not by the path of authority, taking what the ecclesiastics tell us and thinking no more about it, like a blind man trying to understand a sunrise by a formula; but by the path of personal obedience, is Jesus Christ best sought, so that, doing his will, we come into real sympathy with him, and of our own selves recognize him and believe in him and love him. That is the way. At the end of it we may be as unable to pass an examination in dogmatic divinity as Mary was when she sat at his feet in Bethany, or John when he leaned upon his breast at the supper; but we will be close to him, our hand in his hand, the whole allegiance and devotion of our souls given to him; and we may be content.

So it is with certain hard duties to which he summons us, and which are tests of true discipleship. To love our enemies seems at first not only a difficult but an unnatural and unreasonable affection. It appears like an injustice to our friends. We say flatly that we cannot do it. And the other acts and devout exercises which are of a piece with it,—such as speaking as well as we honestly can of those who speak ill of us, and turning the other cheek, and going two miles for those who would compel us to go one, and doing good to those who despitefully use us,—the more we simply talk or think about these requirements of Jesus, the more impossible they seem. But

when we stop discussing and obey; when in this or that immediate instance we do the Master's will, hard as it is, going out of our way to render a kind service to one who has injured us, forbearing to defend our rights, giving up our own strong case and letting our importunate neighbor have his way, actually permitting him to take advantage of us if he will; when we simply do what Jesus tells us to do, what he himself was forever doing,—then the blessed light shines out upon us, and we understand how this Christian behavior is not only the best thing in a vague and general way for society, but is the very best for us in particular, and there is a consciousness of the approbation of God, and a new and consequent joy in living, which is better far than any advantage that we might have gained by pushing in ahead. We keep the covenant and the testimonies of God, and our obedience interprets them, and it is made plain and sure to us that his paths are truth and mercy.

Or, to take another illustration, misfortune of some kind befalls us, grief attends us, the world goes wrong, the light of life is turned of a sudden into black darkness, and a sore burden, too heavy, we think, for us to bear, is set upon our shoulders, and it is desperately hard to see how the paths of the Lord are mercy. They may be truth, they may be right; we may be punished for our sins; but how they can mean mercy, how there can be any

fatherly love in them, as the gospel tells us, passes our understanding.

Then, if we betake ourselves to philosophy, there is but cold and scanty comfort. A wise man wrote a book on the consolations of philosophy, and another wise man advises us to "be revenged upon fate by becoming philosophers" —excellent counsel for the minor perplexities and vexations that beset us. But under a black sky, when things are not only amiss, but dreadfully and tragically amiss, it is a weary and unsatisfying occupation. The more we think the less we see; and nothing is visible at the end of the road but a black wall, doorless and windowless, shutting out the light of heaven. We cannot by our understanding find out the ways of God. In the crises of our lives there is no philosophy which can interpret him to us.

What shall we do then? Let us submit and obey. Let us take up the new burden and carry it, facing life anew under these strange and hard conditions, and seeking to do our daily duty in it, keeping the covenant and the testimonies of the Lord. That is the way that leads to light. Many an afflicted servant of God, bowed down with accumulated trouble, in weakness of body and discouragement of soul, has taken the cross in the name and might of him who sanctified it by his death, and going on blindly, doing the nearest duty and taking the next step and after

that the next, has found that weary road to come out upon the King's highway and to be the path of mercy. God is understood. Not, indeed, at first, and never, perhaps, entirely; but more and more as the days go on, as the duties are diligently done, obedience interprets life.

So it is throughout, in every alternative, in every difficulty; everything comes right if we obey God. This very world in which we live our daily lives is already heaven to those who do the will of God, as it is done in heaven. Here and to-day, they who keep the commandments receive the blessing of which Jesus assured us—they enter into life. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth;" such as keep his covenant and his testimonies know that by the sure witness of their own experience.

TOWARD TARSHISH.

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken."

Jonah, son of Amittai, was born in the country village of Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, in the neighborhood of Nazareth, and was living there, preaching excellent sermons to small congregations, in the early days of the reign of Jeroboam II. This we learn from the twenty-fifth verse of the fourteenth chapter of the Second Book of the Kings.

Hebrew legend, wiser than history, finds Jonah in the little son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah brought back to life, and in the lad who waited on the top of Carmel while the prophet prayed, and looked out over the sea for signs of rain. We only know that Jonah, grown to manhood, and looking out upon the world of Jeroboam's day, predicted victories which came to pass. Jeroboam, according to the chronicle, "restored the border of Israel from the entering in of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah." There had been hard times before that. Israel had suffered humiliation and defeat, until there seemed to be no helper even in heaven. But at last the voice of the Lord was heard promising deliverance, and declaring that he would not blot out the name of Israel, as men had feared. And the Lord's messenger was Jonah.

Ages ago! Homer, if there were ever any Homer, was his contemporary. Romulus, if there were ever any Romulus, did not begin to build the walls of Rome till a full century later. Jonah antedates by at least four hundred years the life of Herodotus, whom we call the "father of history."

This is the prophet who took his disobedient way toward Tarshish.

"The word of the Lord came unto Jonah"—how? Was there a message out of the sky? As he walked or slept or prayed, did these words

shape themselves from silence into speech? Augustine heard a voice under the fig-tree at Milan; Joan of Arc heard voices in the forest of Domremy. We, indeed, have heard no voices. But all of us together have not compassed the boundaries of human experience. It is not wise, especially in these days of wonder in which it is our privilege to live, to deny the possibility of anything. What is impossible?

This, however, is true, that the word of the Lord which came to Jonah has come also to a great many other people besides Jonah. God is all the time speaking to men. Messages from on high have in all ages and in all places been received by men. Heaven and earth, instead of being set at greater distance in the New Testament, were brought nearer together. When Jesus came the sky above was opened, and has stayed open, and the angels of God have ever since been going up and down on errands. Sometimes the word of the Lord is heard in a book, sometimes in the conversation of a friend, sometimes in a sermon, or in some unusual experience, or in the call of conscience. Whenever we are conscious of an urgent voice which says to us, over and over, You ought! You ought! it is likely that we are listening to the word of the Lord.

At Gath-hepher, up among the hills of Galilee, the prophet Jonah heard this word. He was a successful preacher. Country parson though he was, he had preached before the king. Out be-

yond the streets and gardens of the little village stretched the bounds of Jonah's parish, till they reached from Hamath, far in the north, even to the valley of willows which parted Moab from Edom, in the south. Jonah loved his country. He was profoundly interested in everything which had to do with the welfare of Israel. He was one of those rare, clear-sighted men who understand the times in which they live and are in deep sympathy with them, and are able to interpret them to men of duller eyes. Thus he perceived beforehand the splendid victories that were to be won by the arms of Jeroboam. God is all the time trying to give us such insight into the present and the future as Jonah had and his brethren the prophets, but we cannot see. The daily paper brings us the word of God, but we mistranslate it, misunderstand it, or neglect it. We wonder sometimes, when events have really come to pass, why we did not see them coming. God showed them to us, but we looked on with blank vision. Here and there, one is clear-sighted and beholds, and he becomes our leader, our prophet; but most of us catch but dim and unsatisfactory glimpses of the work of God among us. Jonah saw what God was doing.

Thus it was that there came upon the prophet this sudden vision of the nations round about, and especially of the chief of all, of Nineveh the great. Nineveh in Jonah's day was the London of the East, and all the vices of a great city grew

luxuriantly in it. Its wickedness came up before the Lord, and the Lord's voice spoke in Jonah's heart, and the Lord said, You ought! You ought! Ought what? Ought to arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it.

That persistent voice—who has not heard it? With iteration and reiteration, unceasing, urgent, imperative, demanding attention, demanding obedience—You must! You must! Jonah could not sleep. What had he, in his quiet little country parish among the Galilean hills, to do with Nineveh? Nineveh was miles and miles away, quite out of Jonah's jurisdiction. Let the country parson attend to his own business, preach his sermons, say his prayers, make his parish visits, bury his dead, and let the great world go on its own mistaken way. Jonah found that impossible. The voice of the Lord was ever in his ears, called to him as he went about his parish errands along the Gath-hepher streets, distracted his attention from his books, demanded his consideration when he sat down to write his sermons, and the voice said, Go to Nineveh!

So far as we know, Jonah was the only man in Israel to whom the question of responsibility for Nineveh had so much as presented itself. That even God should care for Nineveh was a thought which you would not have found in the minds of many men of Jonah's day. Nineveh was a heathen city; the people who lived there worshiped other

gods; they were all sinners. And God, so most people of that time thought in Jonah's neighborhood, cared only for the Jews, had little interest in the planet outside the narrow boundaries of Palestine. That God gave heed to the prayers which pagans prayed, none of Jonah's acquaintances believed; that they could be saved who had never so much as heard of Jerusalem, was a position which no heretic ventured to defend; that God loved the people who dwelt in that heathen city, that he could be their Father as he was the Father of the family of Abraham, was an idea incredible, preposterous, irreverent.

The people of Jonah's day had much the same opinion of the heathen which was held by some of our own grandfathers. It is not possible, they said, that anybody can be saved unless he is saved exactly as we are. Men, indeed, are still living who hold that every pagan who perishes in his paganism goes without delay into the torments of the damned. In their opinion the sole motive of foreign missions is to hold back the heathen from that bottomless pit into which they are tragically marching, as the Russian soldiers marched into the fatal ditch of Schweidnitz. God is the Father only of us Christians. Nothing is more remarkable about Jonah than this fact, that in those dark days he had caught even this small glimpse of the universal Fatherhood of God.

The trouble with Jonah was not that he disbe-

lieved in the love of God for Nineveh, but that he disapproved of it. He was one of that considerable class of people, some of whom are in holy orders, who are more stern than God. Jonah had a strong prejudice against foreign missions, but it was based, not upon the notion that the heathen might get along very well without the true religion, but upon a decided objection to the well-being of the heathen. He was afraid that a foreign mission might convert the Ninevites; and that, to his mind, would be the calamity of calamities.

Jonah's attitude is easy to understand. I have already spoken of his patriotism. He was an ardent politician. Every victory of Jeroboam brought joy to his heart. Jonah's parsonage at Gath-hepher had a flagstaff at the gable of the roof tall as the church tower, from which the flag of Israel floated in every breeze. He prayed for the time when Samaria would give laws even to Nineveh. But he knew that the destinies of nations are in the hand of God, and that no kingdom could prosper which had not God upon its side. And here was Israel with God and Nineveh without God. Presently there must come the inevitable conflict. Jonah saw that as plainly as if the dust of the armies of the East were already rising from the roads that led to Galilee. And now, if he preached in Nineveh, as his conscience bade him, as the word of the Lord commanded him, Nineveh would repent and turn to God and

be converted, and to all its might of arms and men would be added the allied armies of the Lord of hosts. At the very least God would no longer fight against Nineveh. In that case, Israel fighting alone would be defeated.

Thereupon "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." He saw his duty plain before his face; he refused obedience; he ran away.

It is evident that Jonah was more a politician than a preacher. His supreme thought was for what he conceived to be the welfare of his country. So long as that remained secure he cared not what became of all the lands besides. He was quite content to let great Nineveh go on in sin, and was not willing to do anything to further an alliance between the kingdom of Nineveh and the kingdom of heaven. He turned his back on Nineveh and set his selfish face toward Tarshish. Nineveh was in the East, Tarshish was in the West. Jonah took his journey in precisely the opposite direction from Nineveh, intending to get as far away as possible.

Jonah was the narrowest kind of a protectionist; he did not believe in reciprocity, even in religion. He had the mistaken notion, which has not even yet disappeared out of the arguments of men, that the best policy for a nation is a policy of selfishness.

That idea was once universal. It affected every

department of life. It influenced trade, so that the commercial world was full of jealousy and strife and slander, each man trying to commend his goods by depreciation of his neighbor's. There was a time when almost every firm in every line of business would have rejoiced over the failure of every other competing firm. That there should be brotherhood in trade, so that one should help rather than hinder another, was repugnant to the commercial mind. The minister of God who ventured to suggest Christian fraternity was informed that that might be religion, but it was not business. Men hated their brethren as Jonah hated Nineveh.

The same condition prevailed in some measure in the professions of medicine and law, maintaining a sectarian barrier still between the old school of physicians and the new, between homeopathy and allopathy. It so dominated the newspapers that not one of them would recognize even the existence of a rival except for purposes of hostile criticism. It brought discord into the world of music. It filled even the Christian church with the unrighteous clamor of competing denominations. In general it ministered to that singular tendency in human nature which inclines us to rejoice in our neighbor's tribulations.

Unfortunately, this is not ancient history. We have not entered into the kingdom of heaven yet. Jonah is not dead. The date of the Book of Jonah

is quite unknown, but it might have been written yesterday, so true is it to our present human nature. Jonah is still quite willing that Nineveh should be given over to the devil. Nineveh may be a rival city or a rival nation or a rival mill. Nineveh may be the shop across the street or the church around the corner. So long as Jerusalem prospers, bad luck to Nineveh! So says Jonah.

We are beginning, however, to be wiser than Jonah. We are slowly learning that selfishness is a form of suicide. The prosperity of all is the prosperity of each; the adversity of one is the adversity of all. We are members one of another. You remember how earnestly St. Paul contradicted the heresy of Jonah; every year of civilization adds new emphasis to his argument. The whole world is bound together by lines of interdependence, which are inextricably entangled.

Let not Jerusalem think that Nineveh may lie in ignorance and iniquity and it will make no difference. Jerusalem is the select company of those who are spiritually or financially or intellectually or socially privileged; Nineveh is the great company of the unprivileged. Jonah may hear the word of the Lord and refuse to heed it. He may again, as of old, be obstinately deaf and dumb. Jonah sat in parliament,—rich, respectable, conservative,—and defended, as he thought, the interests of the country by voting against the

limitation of child labor, and against the inspection of factories, and against the public schools. It is characteristic of Jonah that he thinks he knows what is good for Jerusalem better than the Lord does. And the word of the Lord comes to him to-day, calling him to consider Nineveh, to improve his unsanitary tenements, to grant the fair demands of the men who depend on him for wages. And still he turns his face toward Tarshish. Yet the Lord will be obeyed. The circle of brotherhood, as Jesus Christ revealed it, is as wide as the all-surrounding sky; every Nineveh is included in it. Thank God that the tribe of Jonah is becoming less! That way lies the safety of society. Nineveh needs Jerusalem; yes, and alas for Jerusalem if Nineveh goes on neglected!

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

Tarshish was a long way off. Some think that Tarshish was the Tarsus in Asia Minor where St. Paul was born; others think that it was a certain Tartessus on the coast of Spain. The known world, we must remember, was smaller then than it has been since the adventures of Columbus. The ocean-line of Spain was the end of all discovered land; it was the farthest west, as Nineveh was farthest east.

Nevertheless, Jonah was greatly mistaken if he imagined that by escaping to Tarshish he could get out of the presence of the Lord. It is not sure

that he believed that, but it is quite possible. The idea of the universal presence of God came but slowly into the creeds of men. True, the Old Testament begins magnificently with a conception of God as the maker and ruler of all things visible and invisible. We lose the grandeur of those incomparable first chapters of Genesis by making parsing lessons of them to test our knowledge of geology, just as we miss the great truths of the Book of Jonah by discussing the varieties of fish which swam in Jonah's time in the Mediterranean Sea. Still, as the history goes on we find that God is thought of as a Hebrew God. The other nations have gods also, though the God of the Hebrews is better than any of them: "Among the gods, who is like unto thee?"

Jonah may or may not have believed that the dominion of God reached only to the coast-line of Palestine. He may or may not have thought to get out of the sight of God when he made that hurried journey down out of the hills where his parish lay to the seaport of Joppa, and paid his fare and went down into the ship. Why did he go down into the ship? Was he tired that he descended so speedily into his uncomfortable stateroom? or did he perhaps fancy that God might see him if he stayed on deck?

Certain it is that that old idea of the localization of God which was held in Jonah's day has survived into our own. Some people seem still to be of

the opinion that they can take a journey, and thus escape out of the presence of God. Jonah embarked for Europe to get out of the presence of God. He is not the last who has sailed with that intention. Jonah thought to get out of the jurisdiction of God by going west. A good many emigrants into this country seem to have the same opinion. Men and women who in England never missed a service in the church live for months and years in this country without knowing what the inside of a church looks like. In the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains the first public building which is erected in some towns is a saloon; last of all, and a long time after, they build a church. These people are not pagans. They are simply misled by the delusion of Jonah; they think that when they moved away from home they moved away from God.

It may be, however, that we misjudge Jonah. It is possible to read the account of his journey thus: Jonah rose up from the presence of the Lord to flee unto Tarshish. He had been in the presence of the Lord. That is, he had been conscious that God was beside him, speaking to him. He had heard the divine voice. He had seen his duty plain before him; he must go to Nineveh. And when he refused to go, and was disobedient to the heavenly vision, he was disobedient extremely; he went to the extreme of disobedience. He turned his face toward Tarshish.

How true that is to human nature! The word of the Lord comes to a man to-day, to a man who has been giving his allegiance to the devil. He has been living carelessly, neglectfully, unmindful of that side of life which will alone last on into the life to come, letting his soul take care of itself. One day there is a sentence in a sermon which goes straight to his heart, and God takes that sentence and makes it his own word, himself speaking by the lips of the preacher; and God says, as he said to Jonah, You ought! You ought! But the man is not willing to obey. He knows that he ought—that he ought to turn about and repent him of his sins and stand up openly upon the Lord's side, and be God's man and not the devil's man. But he refuses.

And then what happens? Often he goes away, like the prodigal son, into a far country, as far away as he can go. He flees unto Tarshish. He tries to forget what the Lord said by filling his ears with the sound of the earth's clamorous voices. He goes down deep into the black depths of sin as he never did before. It is a tragic thing for a man to hear the Lord's word in his heart, as Jonah did, and to refuse obedience. Sometimes it is the ruin of the man. Out he comes from that close presence of the Lord, having made the great refusal, and swift he rushes into reaction. Down he goes from the still heights where he has talked with God, over the brow of the hill into the valley

of the shadow, and finds the devil's ship waiting by shore, and pays his fare for Tarshish.

But sometimes on his evil journey something happens. As Jonah journeyed something happened. "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." And the consequence was that Jonah got no farther on his way to Tarshish.

Happy the man whose path to Tarshish is impeded! Blest be the storms that beat him back. The prodigal son goes away into the far country, and famine comes and brings him to himself. Fortunate famine, which induces such a blessed hunger! Jonah deserts the way of duty, and the storm comes. Beneficent storm, which stops him on his path to the pit! "It is good for me that I have been in trouble." Jonah began to learn that text by heart, and to make good proof of the wisdom of it, out there under the black sky and over the plunging waves of that angry sea.

The Lord has sent a great wind many and many a time since then, and has made it to blow fierce in the face of many another Jonah, that he might turn him back. When the wind blows wet in our own face, and we make no progress, but are menaced with disaster, we may remember Jonah. It may be that we are bound for Tarshish. These manifold disturbances whose record fills the daily papers, these fierce winds of industrial strife blow-

ing strong and tempestuous from every quarter of the compass, may well remind us of Jonah's salutary shipwreck.

Tarshish means selfishness. Jonah takes his disobedient journey thither, looking out for himself, seeking to serve his own interests. Nineveh means fraternal opportunity; the call to Nineveh is a call to unselfish service, to do some good to our fellow-men, to conduct our personal life and our business life and our national life upon the principles of unfeigned Christian brotherhood. Who will pray for fair weather when the ship of state or church carries passengers bound for the wrong destination? The best blessing of the Lord God in such a case is a mighty tempest in the sea.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE RISEN CHRIST.

"And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Who they were, we know not. One of them was named Cleopas, but the name tells us nothing; of the other we do not know even so much as that. They were common men walking along the common road. They appear for a moment in the company of the risen Christ, and then are no more heard of.

They go out together from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus, on the afternoon of the first Easter day; and as they talk one to the other and are sad, recounting what they saw and heard amid the darkness of Good Friday, and discussing the incredible rumors of the early morning, a stranger overtakes them. He enters at once into their conversation, giving quite another tone and spirit to it, puts hope in their hearts, shows them meanings in the familiar Scriptures which they have never thought of; and presently, coming to the end of their journey, to the gate of their house, and being

asked to stop and eat with them, sits at their table. Thus he takes bread and blesses it and breaks it, and of a sudden their eyes are opened, and they see the risen Lord—see him alive before them and hear his voice, who was crucified and dead and buried. And when they know him he vanishes out of their sight. And then they hurry back to Jerusalem to bring the apostles word, and they tell what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The incident is an illustration of the simplicity of the risen Christ.

It is significant that Jesus should have first appeared, not to an apostle, but to Mary Magdalene, and after that to an apostle indeed, but to the one who had denied him, and then to these two obscure men on the road to Emmaus. There is not the least regard for any precedence save that of need and of affection. Institutions, ceremonies, orders of ministry, do not appear. Mary is weeping by the tomb, and Jesus comes to her with the revelation of comfort. She represents us—all of us who are acquainted with pain and trouble and bereavement, and are in need of comfort. Peter is lamenting his denial of his Master; he too, like Mary, is full of sorrow, but it is another kind of sorrow—that which follows sin; and to him the risen Lord appears with the revelation of love and pardon. Peter also represents us—stands in the place of all of us tempted and weak and sinning people, who do what we ought not,

and leave undone that which we should have done, and who are therefore able to think of Peter with an understanding and a sympathy drawn from our own experience. The two who are going out to Emmaus are asking questions with no answers, and are sad. Theirs is still another kind of trouble—that which comes with doubt, when all that had seemed best and surest is taken away, and we know not what to think. They too represent us; they are neither saints nor heroes, and have no position of eminence among the disciples, but are just plain, ordinary people such as we are, who read and discuss and think and question, and are perplexed and troubled.

The revelation of the risen Lord here and in all other records of it is addressed to us. It is intimate and simple, so that we can understand it. There is a wonderful human and personal element in it. That blessed unconventionality which is seen in all the life of Jesus is here also.

You remember how by the well of Samaria even the apostles were surprised that Jesus should talk with a woman. That was not the way in those days; no rabbi would have done that. We look back more surprised at the apostles than at him, because by the influence of the Christian religion women have come to take a place in the world which was not thought of in that old time except by Jesus Christ. It is hard for us in these days to understand how the appearance of the risen Christ to Mary Magdalene contradicted all the

ecclesiastical traditions and conventions of the time.

As for Peter, Jesus came to him, not because he was an apostle, still less because he was presently to be the chief of the apostles, but simply because he was a poor, miserable, and penitent sinner, who just at that moment needed Jesus more than any of the others; while these two on the Emmaus road seem to have been chosen because they were not apostles at all, but only simple and obscure disciples, and thus akin to us, so that the humblest Christian might know that Jesus cares for him and is concerned in his anxious questions as he talks with his friend along the street. The risen Lord thus emphasizes his direct and personal relation to us as human beings.

People must have been amazed when they read this story, and others like it, three hundred years ago. You know how the Bible had been locked up for centuries behind the barred door of a dead language, so that the people could not read it. And they had come to think of God as very far away in the mysterious recesses of a great palace, whose porch was the church. Those who would approach him, those who would draw near to him in the person of his Son, must wait by the gate while a priest went in with the message. People must have been greatly surprised when they came to read in the gospels how simply and directly, and in what human and friendly fashion, Jesus dealt with men.

There will surely be some state and ceremony after the resurrection; surely it will be necessary then to stand afar off. He will appear to the ministers of his church; he will meet them in awful majesty in some chamber of the temple, where they will kneel in adoration as before an altar, and common folk must be content with what they say. But no; he walks along the dusty road where the wind blows in his face, bringing the odor of the spring flowers with it, and he talks with these two plain men who are going home to the village where they dwell, and makes himself known to them. Out of doors under the free sky, and beneath the roof of a poor man's house sitting at a supper-table like any other tired and hungry wayfarer, the Lord of life reveals himself. There is no church in sight, there are no priests attending, there is no faintest trace of form or ceremony.

Was the breaking of bread a reminder of the sacrament? Perhaps so. Yet it is hardly likely that in the brief and troubled time between the upper room and the house at Emmaus the apostles would have been able to make that eucharistic supper generally known. They had not yet begun to think of it as we do. The pictures are nearer to the truth which show the homely room and the eager and reverent faces of the peasants, and the Master blessing the broken loaf. It was a sacramental feast indeed, but not in the church way. The men were led to recognize the Master in the

blessing and the breaking of the bread by the memory of other times, when he had sat at meat with them perhaps in their own house. It was a reminder of fraternal intercourse; it was an appeal to human and personal relationship; it was the revelation of a friend.

It is true that there was a change in him, so that they did not know him; and that seems at first to take away from the simplicity of the revelation of the risen Christ. There is a mystery about the resurrection body which eludes our understanding. It perplexes us because it is outside the range of our experience.

The body is the same that hung upon the cross; there are the marks of the nails and of the spear; and yet it is not the same, for Jesus is met and not at first recognized. These two who were his disciples walked some miles with him along the road, and listened as he talked with them, looking into his face, and did not know him. Presently, at the Lake of Galilee, Peter and James and John and others of the little apostolic company met Jesus standing on the shore as they drew their nets to land. And again there was this same perplexity about him. Their hearts told them that it was he, but their eyes did not assure them. "None of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." They knew him, and yet they knew him not. It was early in the morning, and the light may have been dim or

there may have been a mist upon the water, so that they could not see clearly; it is more likely, however, that Jesus was mysteriously changed, as he was on the way to Emmaus.

The resurrection body was a real body, not a mere vision of a body. That is made plain. Jesus in the upper room declares it: "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And he sat down and ate before them; and the food was not the sacramental elements of bread and wine, as we might have expected and concerning which we might have given some mystical explanation, but just that which lay upon the table after their plain supper,—some broiled fish and a comb of honey,—illustrating again the homely simplicity as well as the reality of his revelation of himself. And yet he had appeared among them, without the opening of door or window, suddenly and mysteriously, so that they cried out for fear. And at Emmaus, as the two beheld, he vanished out of their sight.

There is identity. The risen Jesus is in very deed he who was dead and buried. The tomb is empty. Yet such a change has come upon him as is implied in what St. Paul said about the resurrection body, when he declared that there is a difference between the natural body and the spiritual body, like the difference between a seed and a flower, and that the body which will be raised is not that body which now is, but another.

There is a problem here which is beyond our power to solve.

Nevertheless, with all this that is mysterious, there is a simplicity, a naturalness, a quiet, human friendliness about the risen Lord such as is seen in all his life. The mystery is not that of state or ceremony. Mary he calls by name. To these two men of Emmaus he talks so wisely, so simply, and so lovingly that they never think of being afraid of him as they walk with their hearts burning within them. They do not imagine for a moment that he is any great one, in the world's sense of greatness. Pilate they would not have asked to supper, nor Caiaphas; but this quiet, kindly stranger is just one of themselves. When he makes as if he would go on, they urge him to come in, as they would ask a neighbor. There was no distance between him and them. By and by, beside the lake, he calls out across the water to the men in the boat and asks the old question which men on the shore have asked of men in fishing-boats since the world began: he asks them if they have caught anything.

How simple it all is! How quiet and unconventional, and utterly different from any made-up story! When we consider the theatrical tendencies of human nature, our easy exaggeration, our fondness for adjective, our pleasure in whatever will surprise our neighbors, and compare this with the narrative of the gospels, we have a new testi-

mony to the genuineness of the record and a new assurance of the truth of the event. The men who wrote were in the spirit of Jesus. His divine simplicity, his dislike of show and ceremony, his quiet kindliness, his unconventionality, are in their words. The simplicity of the risen Christ and his nearness to the souls of humble men these manifestations teach.

That which took place at Emmaus is repeated wherever the disciples of Jesus are met together in his name. As we talk one to another by the way he will be with us; as we read and study, whether in that book which we especially call his "holy word" or in any other book wherein those to whom he has revealed himself have written down the high thoughts they have learned of him, he is beside us. We may know him in the breaking of bread at the holy table.

If we are in the darkness of sorrow, as Mary was, or in the darkness of sin with Peter, or, like the men of Emmaus, in the darkness of doubt, he will give us light. Coming to him, bringing our cares and troubles with us, he will show us truth and give us consolation. Because he rose from the dead he lives, and is alive forevermore, and is the same now as he was. We need not be afraid of him; we need not hesitate to come to him. The pierced hands are held out to us in loving welcome. For our sins he died; for love of us he met and conquered death.

THE SACRAMENT OF REMEMBRANCE.

"THIS do in remembrance of me."

The Master and the disciples sit together at the table. It is the night of the betrayal. It is the eve of the crucifixion. He knows that plainly, and they in a vague way, which is more perhaps of the nature of foreboding than of knowledge, know it also. A sense of impending danger, of approaching crisis and calamity, is in the hearts of all the company. Something is to happen. That loving companionship which has meant so much and been so precious, to them at least, is somehow to be interrupted.

The Master's words are sad words. He is going away; he tells them that distinctly. And as they sit together at the homely supper which symbolizes their fellowship and blessed friendship, he looks ahead into the future. He has that deep longing which every one of strong character and warm affection has, to be remembered after he is gone. He loves these men; he dreads the possi-

bility that they may sometime forget him. And thus he takes a bit of bread and a cup of wine from the table, and passes them about among these friends of his, and says, Do this when I am gone away, in memory of me.

This was the beginning of this sacrament of remembrance. I ask you to think about it just in that way—as the sacrament of remembrance. It is more than that: it is the sacrament of grace; it is the sacrament of worship. But of these meanings I say nothing now. I would emphasize only this first, most natural, most simple signification.

This is not only the first and simplest meaning of the sacrament, but it is a sufficient meaning. It is not theologically sufficient, but it is sufficient religiously, spiritually. That is, there is enough in this understanding of the Lord's Supper to make it both a sacred and a helpful feast. And everybody to whom the sacrament means only as much as this ought to be privileged to come to it. Here we all agree; about this there are no disputes; whatever else this sacrament may mean or not mean, this it means plainly and beyond all controversy. Let us begin here, and go on learning all the other truth we can.

"This do in remembrance of me." Can there be any religious service more entirely natural, homely, and simple? Here are two things: an act and a reason for it; do this—in remembrance.

And both the act and the reason are as simple as simplicity itself.

It is not as if the Lord had asked us to do some very hard thing in remembrance of him: to leave our homes and preach the gospel in the islands of the sea, in remembrance of him; to give all our goods to feed the poor, in remembrance of him; to hang a heavy chain about our neck, as the old monks did, or to take up our abode, like the saints of the desert, upon the top of some narrow, wind-swept pillar, in remembrance of him. The act which he asked is one of the easiest and simplest things that we can do. It is one whose counterpart enters into every day of every life. It is our ordinary eating and drinking, hallowed by a blessed association.

It is true that the bread and wine of the Supper are served to-day in vessels of gold and silver. The homely table of the upper room is lifted high in chancels, cut in stone and carved in costly woods, covered with fair linen and decked with rich embroidery. And the Master's words are recited in the midst of a service of commemoration, the most beautiful and impressive of all the ceremonies of the church. And it is no wonder that the real homely simplicity of the act is hidden from some observers beneath all these adornments and solemnities. But we must not let these embellishments mislead us. These are not the sacrament; these are only what loving hands have

wrought, and rightly wrought, to make whatever is associated with our Lord as worthy as our means can make it. In the midst of these is the homely, simple Supper of the night before the crucifixion. In spite of all the ceremonial and all the priests and doctors, in spite of all that has been falsely taught and foolishly believed and unadvisedly done, at the heart of the most intricate and elaborate of liturgies is still this homely, common meal, this entirely simple act of commemoration.

The act is simple, and the reason for it is as simple as the act. "In remembrance of me"—that is what it means.

You see how completely within everybody's mental and spiritual reach that is. It is not as if he had asked us to do this in commemoration of some difficult doctrine about him—in remembrance of his incarnation or of his atonement or even of his divinity, for then we must needs have been theologians. "In remembrance of me," he said. And that is something which any child can do.

The men who sat about the table at that first communion and received the sacrament, the Lord himself being the celebrant—they knew no doctrines. It is doubtful if they had ever heard the story of our Lord's nativity. It is certain that of the atonement to be by him accomplished they had no idea at all. They did not even believe in his divinity, as we understand that word. The

whole history of the men, and no part of it more evidently than their behavior on that very night, shows that of these exceedingly important Christian doctrines they knew nothing. The men to whom our Lord administered this sacrament were very imperfect theologians.

There was but one qualification which these men had, and our Lord was quite content with that, asked nothing more than that, did not set down a stricter condition even for the future than that. They loved him. They could not one of them have expressed that affection in the accurate phrases of the theological seminaries, but they loved him, nevertheless. They were very much mistaken about him, had quite inadequate "views" regarding him, nevertheless they loved him. And that was all he asked. They were doing their best to follow him; he was satisfied with that.

If you had awakened them an hour afterward, as they lay asleep upon the ground in the garden of Gethsemane, and had asked them what that scene in the supper-room signified, they could not have given you any of the conventional answers. Of transubstantiation, of consubstantiation, of the questions which have perplexed the theological doctors and divided ecclesiastical conventions and disturbed churches, they were altogether—and most happily—ignorant.

So, too, we may well believe, were the simple people into whose houses the apostles went break-

ing bread in the earliest days of the church's history. The act and the meaning of it were alike perfectly simple. They loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and they broke their home-made bread and drank their common wine, sitting at their common tables, remembering him just as he asked.

Gradually, as they came to dwell upon the words in which he had appointed this memorial, two truths would come more distinctly into their minds as they poured the wine and broke the bread. They would see how the remembrance of which he spoke touched both the cross and the crown, concerned both Christ's pain and Christ's promise, and thus looked both back and forward.

This, he said, is my body, which is given for you; this is my blood, which is shed for you. Thus they would remember the cross. It is not likely that at first the words suggested anything more than our Lord's loving self-sacrifice. The bread was not the literal body, the wine was not the literal blood; their eyes and lips told them that. But they could not break that bread nor pour that wine without beholding the tragedy of the cross plain in their sight. The broken body, the shed blood—we may believe as much about the symbols of them or as little as we please; this at least the bread and wine were meant for—to bring these to remembrance.

But there were other words than these. "I will not eat any more thereof," he said, "until the

kingdom of God shall come." And thus St. Paul made his significant comment: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The service which looks back to the cross looks forward to the crown. The remembrance which the Lord intended is not only of pain, but of promise. Somehow the Lord who loved them would come again and take them unto himself. They remembered that when they remembered him. After the ascension into heaven this memory of promise would be increasingly precious. The feast would be a symbol of the joy of heaven; the sadness would be lost in gladness. They would go straight on in thought, as we do, from the "sacrifice of the death of Christ" to the "benefits which we obtain thereby." The first thought of the sacrament as a memorial of some one who was dead would pass away altogether in the reminder which it brought of some one who was alive and living forevermore and waiting to welcome them. Thus the Supper which was partaken of at first with tears has been transformed into a feast of triumph and rejoicing.

These two circles of association, then, gather about the word "remembrance." We remember the cross and the crown; we remember the pain and the promise; and thus we learn how we ought to come to this sacrament. Whoever really remembers the pain of the cross and the promise of the crown cannot well mistake.

For if we really remember what our Saviour suffered for our sake, we will love him. We cannot help it. Love cannot be taught as duty; love comes by loving. We love Christ, not when we are taught that we ought to love him, but when we ourselves see him and come to know him. And such sight and knowledge we may gain by remembering the blessed cross and what was done there for our sake by him who loved us with a love stronger than death. We love Christ when we learn how Christ loves us. And the cross teaches that; the broken bread and the poured wine teach that.

And if we really remember how our Lord has promised to receive us into his presence, we will hate sin, because we will perceive what sin is. It is the bar across the celestial door which hinders us from entering. The credential for entrance is to hate sin. If we wish to come into his presence when he is again revealed among us we know what we must do. The sacrament reminds us of that and helps us to the fulfilment of it.

And these are the only essential qualifications for approach to this sacrament—true loving and right living. And not perfection in either of them,—else we must all stay away,—but only a longing after perfection. Whoever honestly desires perfectly to love God, and is steadfastly purposed to live henceforth according to the laws of God, may come.

It is a proverb that the best is often the enemy of the good. There are always some in every congregation who stay away from the holy communion because they have not yet attained the best; they have not reached their ideal of what a communicant ought to believe and be. There is this or that about the sacrament which they do not understand; there is this or that article in their own personal theology which does not quite square with what their neighbors say is orthodox; thus and thus do they fall short of saintliness. To all such souls this should be said: If you are willing to do this simple thing which the Lord desired to have done in his memory, if you honor and revere him, if you honestly desire to follow more closely than you have been following in his blessed steps, here is your opportunity; "draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort." Come only in this spirit of remembrance, do the will of God as far as you can clearly see it, follow the best religious light you have, and he will show you, step by step, as you grow in grace and in the knowledge and the love of him, all the other truth you need.

WHAT JESUS SAID OF HIMSELF.

"WHICH of you convinceth me of sin?"

"Before Abraham was, I am."

These sentences represent two elemental parts of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The Teacher is the ideal man; no one will dispute that. None will be found to question his humility or his sincerity. Nobody will think of finding in his life any stain of self-seeking, any effort after the popularity or the prizes which common minds esteem. His life is the supreme example of absolute self-sacrifice. It has no parallel anywhere.

Remember how he dealt with men whom he had healed, sending them away enjoined to silence. Remember how he refused whatever pointed to the cheap and foolish applause of the multitude. He cared not for the praise of crowds. He catered not to the prejudices of his time. The men who would have seemed most likely to promote his cause—men like Nicodemus, who had influence, or

like the enthusiastic young disciple, who had money—he made no effort to gain. He set them hard tests, which they did not pass. Instead, he selected twelve poor peasants. He had but stern words for the Pharisees, whom worldly wisdom would have conciliated, who represented the nation and the church, the people in power; he kept his kindness for common folk, even for common sinners. There is no trace of policy in any word or deed of Jesus Christ. And what sought he ever for himself? Only the privilege of helping the needy and comforting the sad and uplifting the fallen; only the place of one who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, with the cross at the end of the task.

There is no need to emphasize what everybody knows, nor to recite what all men, Christians or not, will agree in saying about Jesus of Nazareth. Here is a life of unexampled humility and self-sacrifice. Here is the ideal man.

What, then, shall we do in this confessedly ideal life with such sentences as these: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and, "Before Abraham was, I am"?

These sentences represent elemental parts of our Lord's teaching. They do not stand alone. They might be blotted out, or be shown to have been thrust in by some piously dishonest interpolator—still the characteristics of the teaching which they symbolize would stand. Indeed, the

only way to put out of that teaching the two facts which these two sentences show would be to leave out all the words of Jesus from first to last. Nothing is more sure concerning Jesus of Nazareth than that he said, not once, but many times, such words as: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and, "Before Abraham was, I am."

But think what these sentences mean: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"—that represents a difference between Christ and all the rest of us; we are all sinners, but no man can convict him of sin—and, "Before Abraham was, I am." The Jews knew very well what that meant. They took up stones to throw at him when they heard that. It was the speech of a blasphemer; it was the assertion of an equality with God. And these two assertions, of a difference from other men and of a likeness to God, Jesus made in one way and another, again and again, so that they may be read between the lines of almost everything he said.

Jesus was a teacher of morality. He taught a righteousness which not only went very far beyond any instruction in virtue which had ever been given to men, but which has never been equaled in any century since. No religious teacher, in all the progress of these eighteen hundred years and more, has gone beyond Jesus, or has ever taught any truth which he had not taught already and taught better. It is most noteworthy, when we consider how all other ancient teachers

have been outgrown and left behind, that Jesus should be still in advance of the most advanced of us. Indeed, it is not even imaginable how any morality can ever get closer to the heart of man and to the will of God than this, which touches even the most secret thoughts.

But through all this teaching the Teacher never shows the slightest consciousness of sin. He never confesses in any way, as every other teacher must, that he himself needs his own sermons. There is not a hint of imperfection in himself. He stands forever on the outside of the world's sin, speaking to sinful men. He challenges criticism. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

This is a phase of religious teaching which has no parallel. On the contrary, it is universally true of sanctity that nearness to God and consciousness of sin go together. The indifferent sinner, who is not striving after any high ideal and who never looks critically at his own life, may be in a measure unconscious of sin. But you will never find that to be true of a saint. In every department of life, the better a man is the more aware he is of his deficiencies. The great artist knows a hundred weak places in his work which the petty painter never dreams of, nor could even recognize if they were pointed out. The master in music is conscious of possibilities and ideals, and of a distance between himself and them, which are not in the least understood by mediocrity. To be satisfied is a sign of failing powers.

And yet, here is the ideal man, absolutely unconscious of any defect, never admitting any deficiency even in positions where no other true man could help confessing it, even putting quite aside the suggestion that he himself may be imperfect like other men as a thought not to be entertained.

But Jesus preached something besides ethics; he preached himself. He whose perfect humility all men reverently recognize, whose absolute unselfishness has inspired self-sacrifices innumerable and uplifts and inspires us every day, the ideal of humility and the ideal of unselfishness, preaches about himself. Call to mind but a few of the many things which Jesus said concerning himself: I am the light of the world. I am the bread of life. All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers. I am the good Shepherd, and all men are my sheep. Whatsoever ye shall ask of God in my name, I will grant it. No man can come to the Father, but by me. Ye are from beneath, he says to his congregation; I am from above. I am the king of men, the master and the final judge of the race; at the end of the world I will personally decide upon the destinies of mortals and send them right and left into the two eternities. I demand entire allegiance; nobody may love father or mother, son or daughter, more than me; all souls are mine, and I am to be honored even as the Father.

Philip comes with that strange request: "Lord, show us the Father." And Jesus answers, "Have

I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Judas comes also a little later to know how it is that Jesus, as he had promised, will reveal himself to the apostles, but not to the world. And Jesus answers, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Think what these two conversations mean. Imagine any other teacher saying, as he says: If you would see God, look at me; or, If you keep my words, then God will love you, and we—that is, God and I—will come and dwell in your heart.

What Jesus meant by these and other like startling assertions the Jews understood quite well. "I and my Father are one," he says; and straight go their eager hands reaching after stones to punish him for blasphemy. "Before Abraham was, I am;" and again there is an attempt to stone him. Such words as these were easily understood as claims to equality with God. It is possible nowadays to read into the words certain mystical meanings which would divest them of such claims. There is a union, indeed, between man and God which might make such bold speech possible. But Jesus was addressing Hebrews. He was not speaking to pantheists or mystics. He wished his words to carry a certain definite meaning; for that is the use of words, to convey an idea to those

who listen. And the words carried just the truth which he intended. The Hebrews understood: Jesus was a blasphemer. And the Jews were right. If Jesus were but a man like other men, then he deserved stoning, being indeed a blasphemer, as they said.

Take the sentence which is quoted in the text: "Before Abraham was, I am." Christ had just been telling the Hebrews: "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." This they naturally thought was an extraordinary utterance, and they answered at once that all the saints and patriarchs were dead. Abraham was dead and the prophets were dead. "Whom makest thou thyself?" "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead." Jesus replies: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." "Why," cry the Jews, "thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" To which Christ answers, "Before Abraham was, I am."

There is a difference greater than appears in the two English verbs "was" and "am" between the two verbs which stand here in the Greek of the gospel. The only variation which the translation shows is in the person and the tense; but Jesus used two different verbs. "Abraham," he said, "was born," but "I am." Nor is this all. "I am," we must remember, was the name of God. There was but one "I am" known to the men to

whom Christ spoke. The only one who could look back to Abraham's day and say truly, "Even then, I am," was God himself. The assertion was a plain claim to equality, if not to identity, with God. And in that way the men to whom he spoke at once understood the phrase. At once, also, they made their understanding plain by their hostile and indignant gesture, and he uttered no disclaimer. That was precisely what he meant to say.

It is as clear as day. If it were but a single assertion we might, perhaps, find an exegesis by which we could evade it. If it were in but a single gospel, still some evasive theory might be possible. But it is bound up with the utterances of Jesus as they are recorded by all four of the evangelists. Again and again comes in this note of startling self-assertion.

It was, indeed, this self-assertion, and nothing else, which brought Jesus of Nazareth to the death upon the cross. "We have a law," the Jewish judges said to Pilate, "and by our law he ought to die,"—what for?—"because he made himself the Son of God." Read the account of the trial and you will see how plain it is. They asked him point blank if it were true that he claimed to be the Son of God, and he gave them a direct answer. "Thou sayest" is the phrase he used, meaning, "thou sayest truth;" "the Son of God I claim to be and am." Thereat they rent their clothes, and

the high priest said, "There is no further need of witnesses; you have heard his blasphemy. What is your sentence?" And with one voice they answered, "Death!" So that Jesus was crucified for blasphemy.

Consider but one instance more. It is after the resurrection. Thomas the doubter beholds his Master. There is no room left longer in his heart for doubt. Thomas falls at Jesus' feet. And what name has he for Jesus? "My Lord," he cries, "and my God!" And Jesus permitted it. He did not rebuke Thomas like the angel in the vision of St. John. He did not forbid him like the apostles by the gate of Lystra whom the crowd mistook for gods. He did not say, as they did, "I am a man of like passions with you." He spoke no syllable of disapproval. He permitted Thomas to call him God!

Here, now, are two remarkable and undoubted facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth—or may we not say three facts?—which nobody calls in question. One fact is that he was the ideal man; and the other two are that he asserted a difference between himself and other men in that he was guiltless of any stain of sin, and that he asserted a likeness between himself and God such as no other sane person has ever asserted since the world began, even to the extent of permitting a disciple to adore him as God made visible. These three facts are not involved in any doubtful con-

troversy. They are not touched by any criticism of documents. They are not implicated in any question concerning the miraculous. They are so large and continuous and essential a part of the history of Jesus of Nazareth that if they can be denied nothing else can stand. Into any discussion of the relation and the differences which some imagine between the Jesus of history and the Christ of dogma these facts do not enter. There is no possible divorce between the biography of the Prophet of Nazareth and these three facts.

But how can the three facts be made to go together? "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" and, "Before Abraham was, I am"—how shall we fit these sentences and all that they stand for into the ideal life? There are but two ways in which the question can be answered. If Jesus of Nazareth was no more than a mere man, as we are, then here is a puzzle, an inconsistency, a contradiction, to which we can offer no reverent solution. Jesus must remain forever a perplexing and unsolved enigma.

But if Jesus of Nazareth is more than man; if he is what the Christian creed asserts him to be; if he is what we with all our hearts believe him; if he is what he himself—the ideal man, the hero of heroes, the saint of saints—claimed for himself; if Jesus of Nazareth is indeed God made manifest among men, then the three facts fit together perfectly. All contradiction passes away.

Everything is natural and right and plain. The Christian creed is the one key which can open this complicated lock. Jesus Christ, according to the only records which we have of him, is God made manifest in man.

AT THE WEDDING-FEAST.

"And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage."

Blessed is that marriage where the wedding-guests are the disciples of the Lord Jesus, and where he himself is present. Blessed is that social company into which Jesus Christ may come and find a welcome.

The gospels are rich in such intimate and domestic incidents. Jesus came into the closest relation with that side of human experience which is at once the most homely and the most tender. He began our life at the beginning, and hallowed every year of it. He consecrated motherhood, and infancy, and obedience, and daily work, and neighborliness, and the associations of home and family and friendship. And lest marriage should seem in any way discredited by the circumstances of his own life, he begins his public ministry here in Cana at a wedding-feast.

They wanted him at the wedding. They were

not afraid of him; they did not stand in awe of him. He seemed one of themselves, and made himself in very truth one of themselves, so sincerely did he sympathize in all their interests, into such natural and friendly and fraternal familiarity of intercourse did he enter with them.

That is but an idle legend which teaches that he never smiled. His whole life contradicts it. He saw, indeed, the sadness of the world, and shared it, and human sin and misery lay as a heavy burden on his heart, and he felt the need sometimes to get away from the sight of faces and the sound of streets into the sweet solitudes of the desert and the mountains and the sea, where he might be with God alone. But he never once despaired. That was impossible. His faith forbade it. Never did he set his face in the direction of the night; he was of the day, and saw the dawn. Deep he looked into the black depths of sin and pain, but even there he saw his Father's face reflected. He knew that this is God's world, not the devil's, and he looked ahead with absolute confidence to future victory. He must have been supremely happy. Little children loved him; they liked to have him lift them into his strong arms. Every day the weary and discouraged and distressed were helped, made content, and comforted by the look of his blessed face. It did them good to see him in the street. He went often to the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and they

were glad to have him come; he was a dear and welcome guest. He was called to the wedding-feast at Cana because the good people there wanted him.

It is plain that Jesus did not wish to make an official impression upon the men and women whom he met. He went among them wearing no robes of office. They must receive him for himself. Nothing could have been more informal or unconventional than his manner and appearance. People were looking for an ecclesiastical Messiah. They were expecting some dramatic advent. And when Christ came just a plain man, making no pretensions, going about on foot in the company of plain citizens, they could not understand it. A Messiah who could be invited to a country wedding and could accept the invitation was a hopeless contradiction to all the scribes and Pharisees.

How he would amaze us if he were to come again and walk along our streets! Every day he lived he astonished somebody, especially the ministers and the prominent church people. They could not make him out. He cared so little for most of the things in which they were particularly interested; he set such small store by the doctrines which, in their opinion, made up the best part of religion; he looked with such scant appreciation upon the laborious learning of their theologians, and was so indifferent to their punctilious ritual, and showed such lack of interest in their ecclesias-

tical institutions, that they could not accept him. He looked at life from a point of view other than theirs. He disregarded all their traditions and offended all their prejudices. They declared that he was no churchman, and that he was quite astray in his theology, and that he was a preacher of sedition.

And if he should return and live among us here as he lived there, wearing our common dress and using our common speech, would we have other names for him? Would we approve of him? For he would behave himself among us just as he did then, as a man who saw with absolute clearness into the very heart of truth. He would set at naught many of our conventional valuations. He would be found in the strangest company. He would make as little of our social prejudices as he would of our ecclesiastical distinctions. We would account him a democrat and a radical. Yes, he would scandalize us all. So close have we brought his religion into contact and sympathy with the empty and unfraternal phariseeism from which he separated his disciples! He was divine; he was God's Son. He was God himself in such sense that whosoever saw him saw the Father. When we would think of God, we may turn our minds toward Jesus Christ and get as near a revelation as we are able to receive. But he lived here as a man—the most honest, the least conventional, the simplest and friendliest, the most familiar and

fraternal, the most straightforward man that ever lived.

We are told at the end of the record of the Cana wedding that this which happened there was the first of his miracles. A better word than "miracle" is "sign." That is what St. John called it. This was one of his signs, something to be not only wondered at, but studied as a lesson wherein we may learn truth about him. This was a sign, then, of what? Of his gracious, kindly spirit, of his blessed thoughtfulness for others, of the grace of God that was in him, of his divine unconventionality. John the Baptist, in his gown of camel's skin, would hardly have been called from the wilderness to be a guest at a wedding. These humble people would scarcely have presumed to ask a scribe to join in their poor pleasures. They had no hesitation about calling Jesus, because they knew that he would fit in with the other guests—better, indeed, than any, yet not for a moment behaving as if he were conscious of a difference. He was not one of those who make goodness repulsive.

They wanted him at the wedding; that is evident. And he wanted to go; he accepted the invitation. Therein we may find another point of contact between his life and ours.

For the purpose of this gathering was not, in the conventional sense, religious. It was a social meeting. The company were intent upon enjoy-

ing themselves. And Jesus was present, sanctioning and blessing that social joy.

There is nothing Christian in the act of making one's self miserable. To stand apart from society is not a Christian attitude. Jesus did not pray that we might be taken out of the world, only that we might be kept from the evil of it. Indeed, the Christian has a distinct and inevitable responsibility for the world, and is to blame if he turns his back upon it and cheerfully lets it go on in its own way. To enter into society, to be in sympathy with all that elemental part of life, to rejoice in all the happiness of men, is eminently Christian.

Did Jesus go as a matter of duty, and only appear to be pleased when he was really weary of it all? Did he wish that day in Cana that he were out of it and in some church instead saying his prayers? I do not think so. He accepted the invitation as sincerely and cordially as it was given. He wanted to go, and took an honest, human pleasure in it. So may we.

This was a homely feast. The peasant guests drank the wine with so good a thirst that there was not enough of it to go around. The evangelist tells the story with entire frankness, and does not try to make out that things were better than they really were. It was no stately and ceremonious occasion, such as the great painters have shown on their fair canvases. It was a festival

of country people. And Jesus Christ took part in it, and was pleased to be among them. The Christian religion has not come into the world to take any real pleasure out of it. Nobody is so wholesomely happy as a good Christian. The Christian's mission is to live here in this world where God has put him, to enter into human life in all its varied interests, to be a neighbor to his neighbors.

This relationship Jesus finds to be full of Christian opportunity. At once there is presented to him a chance to be of help. If he had stayed away he would have missed it. Society is full of these blessed possibilities. It is made up of getting and giving. The Master goes to the wedding, and straight he sets about making his contribution to the enjoyment of the occasion. Thus it is that his true disciples go into society to-day, not selfishly, not only to get pleasure. There is no sort of honest compact between Christianity and selfishness. A selfish society is an essential contradiction to Christ's spirit.

It is not difficult to recognize the good Christians in society. They are busy making other people happy. They are mindful of the divine example; not to be ministered unto, but to minister, is their good purpose. The company is better because they are in it.

We must not think that the promise of the Lord's special presence wherever two or three are

gathered together in his name means church services and prayer-meetings, and nothing else. We are told that we may eat and drink in the name of Jesus. That touches all the teas and dinners of society. We may meet socially in his name and thus invite him to our company; in his spirit, —that is what the phrase means,—in his blessed, kindly, thoughtful, and fraternal spirit.

To meet Jesus Christ. What changes must needs be made if that were written upon the invitations! Some of the extravagances of society would seem not quite in place in his observant presence. The state and show, the pomp and vanity, the wasteful luxury, by which some of the rich affront the deprivations of poverty, must pass away, and a simpler mode of life must take their place. There might be a difference in the list of guests. Whom shall we ask to meet him? The question will not be whom to leave out, though it might seem hardly worth while to invite hopelessly unappreciative people; what new names must be added of those whom he would like to see in the company? That would introduce a most democratic condition of things into our somewhat narrow society. Would there be any changes in the dress or manner or conversation of the guests? We must ourselves decide. Certain it is that nothing is right of which Jesus Christ would disapprove. If his presence, suddenly made manifest among the company, would cause an interruption of the pleasure of the

guests, the pleasure and the guests would thus be shown to be at fault. In truth he is among us, even as he was in Cana at the wedding, though we do not see him.

"And his disciples believed on him." That was the result of that which happened at the feast. Not that the miracle was the reason of their faith; they were already his disciples, and believed. What the sign effected was the deepening and strengthening of their belief. They had been drawn to him, not on account of what he did, but on account of what he was. And seeing this gracious and fraternal thoughtfulness of his, and the divine grace and mystery of power that was in him, their admiration and their love increased. He became more and more their supreme ideal. They believed in him, and resolved to live as he lived. We too, if we believe in him, will do the same.

JOINING THE CHURCH.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Everybody wants to be saved. Christ came and lived and died to make salvation possible to everybody. But how shall we translate that possibility into reality? Here is our longing; there is Christ's promise. How shall we get them together and be saved? Jesus answers that question plainly: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." No metaphysics about that; no indefiniteness, no mysticism, no theological vagueness, no uncertainty about that. You are looking for the way to heaven, and wandering about, now here, now there, following lights that are but the lanterns of will-o'-the-wisps, and you meet Christ and ask the road, and he answers, "Here it is," and points it out before your feet as clear as day. Whoever would be saved, this he must do: let him believe and be baptized.

I have nothing to say at present about belief or

about baptism. But I do want to say something concerning the word "and." I desire to emphasize this word "and." Jesus sets belief and baptism together. Whoever would be saved, there are not two alternatives for him to choose between. Salvation is not for him that believeth; salvation is not for him that is baptized. "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved."

Salvation does not mean an escape in the far future out of some red-hot dungeon garrisoned by devils. It is concerned with our daily living. It means spiritual health. To be saved is to be making the very best of life to-day. Jesus says that belief alone is not enough to insure spiritual health; and baptism alone is not enough to insure spiritual health. To be spiritually whole and strong we must believe and be baptized.

Is there anybody who is wiser than Christ in regard to spiritual health? Any better doctor for the soul than he is? Any advice worth following rather than his, contrary to his, in this matter? The counsel of Christ in respect to spiritual soundness and strength amounts to this, that nobody need expect to be a good Christian whose religion is shut up within the silence of his own soul and does not somehow make itself visible and audible. Real Christianity is never dumb. It speaks, and must speak, and is helped and strengthened by speaking. It is not for nothing that we are given tongues. We are learning wonderful things in

these days about the influence of the mind upon the body, but the body has a still greater influence over the mind. That is the testimony of everybody who has any real acquaintance with himself. We all know that prayer, if it is never put into words, if it is forever shut up in a silent heart, presently dies, like a man shut away from the air; and that love without expression changes into indifference; and that sentiment amounts to nothing and speedily withers away unless it is made to yield some sort of fruit; and that good resolutions must be uttered aloud and straightway translated into good acts; and that to take a decided and open stand fortifies every good purpose.

Right believing must be clenched by right behaving. If you are upon the side of right, the side of Christ, say so. Stand there where you can be seen and counted. That will help you to stay there. All this must be evident to everybody; this is human nature. And when Jesus set that significant conjunction between belief and baptism, he was simply recognizing the plain facts of human life and making wise provision for them. We have both a soul and a body. Belief is for the soul; baptism is the outward expression of it, the utterance of it, the reinforcement of it in the body.

Here is something else which "and" means. It means that there are two kinds of life which we all live every day,—a dependent life and an independent life, on the one side social and on the other

side individual, alone and yet not alone,—and that these two kinds or sides of human life both must be taken into account. We have our own personal existence and responsibility; at the same time we are singularly in need of one another, quite unable to stand alone. Every day we give out and breathe in thought, sentiment, example, influence. No man liveth to himself, nor even dieth to himself. Take these two sentences, which St. Paul set side by side in the same letter: "Bear ye one another's burdens," and "Every man shall bear his own burden." These are the two lives which we all live, one personal, the other in partnership. There is no possible evasion of these two sides of human life. You might as well try to construct a board which should have an upper surface, but no lower surface.

Jesus takes us just as we are. He wants us to be saved, to be spiritually sound, and he gives us a counsel in the matter which includes all the conditions and all the facts of the case. We have a soul: we must believe. We have a body: we must be baptized. We stand, each of us, individual and alone before God; in him we must believe. We stand also in union with our fellow-men, dependent upon their companionship, having this association and the potency of it as one of the supreme facts in our life. Let us have this taken account of and turned to its best uses in the church, into which we shall be baptized.

It is our Lord's advice and counsel, then, to all who desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, to all who would be spiritually sound and strong, to all who would be saved, that they should join the church. This is the gate which, Jesus tells us, opens upon the road that leads to life eternal. Perhaps you can get there some other way. With all my heart I hope so. Perhaps you can clamber over the wall somewhere and find some short cut across green pastures to the celestial city. Baptism is such a narrow gate, it would be a pity to compel everybody to go through it. And the company along the road is not, I am afraid, so select as it might be. You must set the blame for that upon Christ, who at the very start invited publicans and sinners and other disagreeable people into it. Perhaps you may find some broader gate, and more exclusive company, and pleasanter road, and so get there, whither we all want to go, into the land of life. Perhaps so; but take care, and be sure. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That, anyhow, is certain.

Our Lord was addressing people in whose case baptism was the conscious entrance into the Christian church. It was an act preceded by repentance and faith. It was a clear, definite exercise of the will, choosing Christ and his service. With us to-day baptism does not, for the most part, mean so much as that. Somebody else did the choosing

for us when we were baptized. In this case all that part of the significance of baptism is transferred to that later service which we call "confirmation." Our conscious entrance into the Christian church is by this service.

The connection between baptism and this service is as close as the connection between childhood and youth. One grows out of the other and fulfils it. Between them they divide the meaning which in the text is included in baptism alone. And in this division it falls to this later service to be the act by which we take our open and decided stand. It is in this later service that we bring ourselves into complete relationship with the great body of believers. So our Lord's words mean all that is implied in the phrase "joining the church." He that believes and becomes a member of the church, he shall be saved.

Why is it that everybody does not see this? Is it not plain? Does it not commend itself to all reasonable, good people? Is it not exactly what the Master meant? Yes and no. That is the answer which a hundred reasonable, good people must this moment be making—good people, excellent examples for the best of us, diligent in all charitable work, as regular and attentive in their places as any member of the vestry; and yet they have never completed their part of the sacrament of baptism. They have never joined the church. Year by year the opportunity comes, but it passes

by, and these good people have not stirred. There are sermons and sermons and sermons, all courteously and patiently listened to, but not believed nor taken to heart. Nothing is done. They are not persuaded. Why?

There is no lack of possible explanations of a reluctance to join the church.

One good reason for not joining the church is unrepented sin. You cannot always tell what people are by looking at their faces. If one who seems to be living a good life has some secret and shameful sin, still persisted in, still loved, hidden away behind it, he has a sufficient reason for not uniting with the church. We want all the sinners we can persuade to come in. That is what the church is for. But we want them to leave the love of sin outside. You cannot take that in with you. Leave it outside, and we will give you welcome. If that is why you stay outside,—because you are not willing to part company with that sin,—you are in the right place where you are, and you must stay there; you must stay outside forever. Are you content to do that?

Another excellent reason for not joining the church is a general indifference to religion. There are people—there is no denying it—who do not care particularly for religious things. They are a good deal more anxious for their stomach than they are for their soul. They value their head more than their heart. They have an idea that

this life is going on forever; that day after day, world without end, they will buy and sell, and eat and drink, and get up in the morning and go to bed again at night as serenely as the sun. Death is a fable to frighten children; judgment is a myth; and the notion that there will be another life, which will depend upon their religious living in this life, is but a fond delusion. How any human being who has the gift of reasonable thinking can persuade himself that all the worthier side of life is simply not worth while is indeed amazing. But men and women do so persuade themselves, and set their faces down toward the ground, and shut their eyes to all the tragedies daily enacted about them, and live without prayer, without any serious thoughts, intent upon ideals which they share with their dogs and horses. Such people are in their places outside the church. There are already enough indifferent people in the church; we want no more.

It is possible that some people stay outside because they are waiting for some extraordinary invitation to come in. They are looking to be "converted." They are expecting a "change of heart." There are two conceptions of religion held by religious people. One is that religion is chiefly feeling; the other is that religion is chiefly living. One of these conceptions of religion emphasizes emotion; the other emphasizes the will. Neither of these can be left out of religion, but

the will comes first. God will do his part, but you must do your part first. You must plant before God will give the increase. Change your mind—that is what the word "repent" means in the Greek of the gospels. Change your will, and there will be a change in your heart. Give your will to Christ, and you will give him your heart at the same time. The first step in religion is to follow the best religious light that you see, and to set about doing that nearest duty which is plain to you. And you remember how it was with the lepers in the story of the miracle—"as they went they were cleansed."

Is there such a duty? Does Christ really ask it? You see what he said about being baptized. That means joining the church as plain as words can make it. He founded a church; is there any doubt about that? Here is a way of entrance, the gate of baptism, and this gate must swing into something. Nothing can be plainer than that Christ not only founded the church, but that he made that foundation one of the very chief occupations of his ministry. His great work was not preaching, nor making missionary journeys, nor writing volumes of theology. What was it? It was the careful training of a little company of men who should be the first officers of this society. He set baptism as the service of initiation into this society. On the night before his crucifixion he ordained a special service of commemoration,

to be used at the meetings of this society, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." He promised his blessed presence with this society until the end of the world. Under the name of the "kingdom of heaven" he was forever talking about it and making ready for it. And here it is. Here is the church. Was all this preparation vain? This church which Christ founded, is it, after all, of so little value that it makes no difference to you whether you belong to it or not?

"Whoever will confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven." Joining the church is a way of confessing Christ before men. Every good word and good deed may, indeed, be a confession of Christ also; but not certainly. They may be a confession of Buddha, or of Benjamin Franklin. They are a confession of some moral master. But who is it? Christ? Then say so. Let us be sure about it. Set yourself plainly upon his side. Let your good life count for him. That is the confession of Christ.

Christ wants everybody who is on his side to show his uplifted hand, to make that allegiance of his perfectly plain. And there is no way that I know of by which this confession of allegiance may be so naturally and unmistakably made as by joining the church. If you are really on his side, you are not ashamed to say so, are you? Nor afraid? You must see how he sets value upon

such an act as this open declaration. You would not be satisfied, in any hostile or indifferent company, to have your friends content themselves with any silent affection, lifting no voice in your defense. That would not be genuine friendship. It is not enough, in a political campaign, to have a silent opinion. Which side are you on? Here choose a ballot, cast in your vote, enroll yourself upon this side or that. It is not sufficient, in a day of war, that a citizen should be silently patriotic. Everybody who is really on the right side, in such a day, is bound to make his position known.

Now here is the world on one side, and here is the church on the other; here is the kingdom of Christ, and here is the kingdom of the devil. Which do you believe in? Which side are you on? Of course you are on the side of Christ. We infer that from your presence here with us. Why not say so plainly and openly? Why not confess before men, as he asks, that he is really your Lord and Master?

People sometimes imagine what they would have done for Christ if they had lived in his neighborhood while he was dwelling among men. The phrases of religious invitation seem to them altogether vague and unsatisfactory. "Come to Christ," the preacher says. Ah, yes; if they could but rise up on their real feet and go out to meet him, as John's disciples did that long-ago morning

far away in Syria, that would be easy enough. But to "come to Christ" to-day and here, under changed conditions—what is it? how to do it?

Here at last is an answer to that desire for something visible and tangible to do. You can stand up and come forward, in the presence of your neighbors, and set yourself on Christ's side. He recognized just this need, as I said at the beginning, and made provision for it. To faith he added baptism; belief he supplemented with confession. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

THE PERDITION OF THE RESPECTABLE.

"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness."

That concerns us. It seems incredible. The Jews, who stood then where we stand now, did not believe it. They listened with much indifference, and went their way, thinking no more about it. The strong words entered only into their outward ears. And that is true of us. That we respectable, intelligent, moral, even religious folk, who attend church with regularity and are not known to break any of the ten commandments, that we may be among the lost we do not for a moment imagine. The thought is not only horrible, but preposterous. We take it quietly and confidently for granted, every one of us, that we shall be saved. That some who stand in the blessed light at the great day of revelation and reward shall look about for us, and miss us because we are cast out into outer darkness, is but a brief remove from the impossible.

We cast out? We, who say our prayers every

night and morning, and read our Bibles, and have been baptized, and are at service Sunday after Sunday, and are reputable and esteemed and useful members of society,—we cannot be lost! Surely all educated, refined, and well-conducted people will go to heaven. It is quite likely that some of the men and women whose names we read in police reports will go to hell. They ought to. That is the place where they belong. And in the slums, in regions where it is not safe to walk after the sun sets, where the vicious and the miserable have their wretched habitation, huddled together thick as vermin, there, no doubt, are some lost souls. But we ourselves—that is a different matter. We and our friends shall be as favored in the other world as we are in this.

It must be said that the words of Jesus Christ sharply interrupt this pleasant vision. There were those in his day who said the same things which we say, and seem to have had as good reason as we have for saying them. They were respectable people; they were church-going people; they were not only members, but enthusiastic members, of the church. Nobody questioned their acceptance with God—except Jesus Christ. The common sinners held them in regard. They were cultured; they had money; they lived in pleasant homes among their books and pictures, just as we do; and they had the same comfortable opinion of themselves which we have.

When Jesus found fault with the Pharisees, everybody was astonished. When he pointed out with what extreme difficulty a rich man could enter into the kingdom of heaven, even the disciples cried in amazement, "Who then can be saved?" It seemed as incredible then as it does now that any really respectable people should be lost.

But there was the rich man, well dressed and well mannered, entertaining his friends at generous and elegant dinners, and not, so far as we are told, doing anything positively bad; you know what happened to him. There were the people thrust away to the left in our Lord's vision of the final judgment; good enough people as men and women go in this world, and against whom not one single sin was charged, not a commandment had they broken; you remember how little their excellent respectability availed them. What had they done? They had minded their own business; they had gone their ways honestly enough, cheerfully living their pleasant lives, doing no harm to any man. And yet there they stood, in the swift glimpse which Jesus gave of the dread future, cast into outer darkness. The "first," he said, even the first, the chief, and seemingly the best among us, may be but the last then, and be profoundly grateful to get any sort of entrance whatsoever. The children of the kingdom,—if that means anybody now, it certainly means such as we,—away they go into the place of weeping.

There will be Christian ministers among the lost. For I remember how the Master said, in words which to me are the most dreadful in the Bible, "Many will say to me in that day [that is, in the great day of decision], Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [that is, preached] in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" That means effective preaching and efficient working, so that souls are saved under the influence of it. What answer, then, will be made to these good preachers, to these earnest and successful workers, to these men whose names were known in all the city where they lived for their learning, their eloquence, their public spirit, their zeal, their splendid ministry? Some there will be among them to whom Christ will profess, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." So that a Christian minister, able and orthodox, and pastor of a large parish, may descend the steps of his pulpit into the bottomless pit.

St. Paul was afraid of it. You know what he said about the possibility of his having preached to others and yet being a castaway himself. Every earnest Christian minister knows what that fear is; knows the ease with which devout speech is uttered when the heart is dumb; knows the fatal distance between the Sunday preaching and the week-day practice; knows how the phrases of religion and of faith become conventionalized so that they de-

generate into the cant of a profession, into the language of a trade; knows how pleasantly the praise of friends takes the place of the approbation of God. And he has reason to be afraid.

So that we are all in the same case, we respectable, religious people. We are in danger of the outer darkness.

We are not preached to as our fathers were. We are not taught in these days to fear God. The emphasis is now upon the loving Fatherhood of God. Hell is not so much as mentioned among us. Religion is a very easy matter. All this is a blessed reaction from the grim doctrines of the past.

Let us not forget, however, that all reactions go too far. What we want is just the Christianity of Jesus Christ, just that; nothing sterner than that, but nothing softer than that, either. We want to stand where he stood, and to see life as he saw it, and to be taught of God by him. Nothing can be more evident than that human life as he saw it is set about with perils. Salvation is no indifferent attainment, to be had for the asking, without trying. There is no broad avenue to heaven. That road leads in quite a different direction. Peter, who had learned of Jesus, declared that the righteous may scarcely be saved, and asked an unanswered question about the ungodly and the sinners. The death of the soul is set forth in the gospel as one of the elemental possibilities. The

uncared-for body dies; no gorgeousness of raiment can avail to save it; and the soul dies under similar conditions of neglect. And to this peril we respectable people are especially exposed, because respectability is so plausible a substitute for real religion.

Many shall come from the East and from the West, from pagan lands, from the back alleys of great cities, men and women whose faces were never seen within the doors of churches. These shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven, and some respectable persons, confident of eternal reward, children of the kingdom, to whom these blessings naturally belong, shall be cast into outer darkness. God forbid that any of us be among that number.

What shall we do, then? Let us be profoundly dissatisfied with the cheap virtue of respectability. It is not enough. It may be as much pagan as Christian. There may be no religion in it whatsoever. For the most part it is but convenient conformity to the decent customs of the society in which we live. It will never save a soul. Not for such an easy life as this did Jesus die upon the cross. We could live this life if he had never come.

Common morality will not save us from the outer darkness. The business man's accounts may balance accurately, and all his transactions may be honest according to the accepted standards of the commercial world, and yet he may be cast out

at the last. There is a great difference between the books of heaven and the books of the commercial agencies; it would be interesting and terribly instructive to compare the ratings—so much treasure here, so much treasure in the world invisible!

Education, culture, taste, refinement, will not save us from the outer darkness.

Church-going will not suffice to save us. There will be those outside the closed door who attended church services every pleasant Sunday during a long and well-conducted life, or else the words of the New Testament do but lead us astray.

Orthodoxy will not save us. There will be heretics, no doubt, in plenty, who will sit down in the kingdom of heaven, while some aggressive and uncompromising defenders of the faith will be cast out.

You remember what St. Paul said over and over about the relation between good works and faith. He said that good works are not acceptable to God without faith, which means simply that the deed is estimated according to the intention of the doer. In the Master's phrase, we have our reward, the reward for which we strive. If the good life is lived for the sake of the esteem of the neighborhood, the good man gets that and nothing more. If the good deed is done for no particular purpose, from a desire to conform idly to the easy conventions of society, it has its reward, such as it is. No man ever planted grass and reaped wheat.

No man ever lived to this world and won the benedictions of the world to come. Patient work, together with a quick recognition of commercial opportunity, will make men rich. Patient study, with ability to see the principle behind the small details, will make men wise. But rich men will not go to heaven because they are rich—rather in spite of it; and wise men will not go to heaven because they are wise. The good will have admission there. They who do right because it is right, they who serve because in serving their brethren they are serving God, they who for the sake and love of Jesus Christ live according to his example—they are in heaven now. Already, here and now, they have eternal life; they have their reward.

Religion is not a department of life which may be set by itself, like art or music. We may not say, I will spend my mornings in the cultivation of my mind, and my afternoons in the development of my body, and my evenings in the saving of my soul. Religion is a quality of life which either enters or does not enter into everything we do. So that one may study religiously or irreligiously, and may transact business with or without religion. And when St. Paul distinguishes between good works and faith, he is simply declaring the difference between a good deed done in a right spirit, and the same good deed done without a right spirit.

What we need is faith. Not that faith which consists only in the intellectual accuracy of our understanding of theological formulas; mere theology will bring us no nearer to salvation than mere mathematics. But living faith, which turns our thoughts toward God, and dwells within our hearts, and is part humanity, and part truth, and all love—that we must have.

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: that means to keep him ever in devout memory as our supreme example, to consult him in every doubtful alternative, to act and speak and think in his spirit, to live in him and for him, to love him, to give ourselves to him—that will take our indifferent respectability and change it into true religion; that will save us from the outer darkness.

IN THE TIME OF TRIBULATION.

JESUS promised no escape from tribulation. "Ye shall have tribulation."

The Christian religion will not save us from the physical ills which beset the path of human life. The Christian when he is sick will be just as sick as the Mohammedan. Christ sets no mark upon the disciple's door, that the angel of death may pass over that house of holy living and touch no inmate of it. Contagion and accident, the cyclone, the tempest, the flood, the fire, make no distinction of persons. Health and disease do not wait on degrees of moral merit.

Neither will the Christian religion save us from the difficulty which attends success. Winning depends on working. God throws no lucky chances on Monday in the way of him who attends church on Sunday. He flings no stumbling-block before the feet of him who cannot say the Christian creed. The worker is rewarded in proportion to his work. Christianity is not a royal road to wealth, to wis-

dom, to prosperity, to fame; it is not a royal road to anything, except to the benediction of God, and God does not certify his benediction by any immunity from tribulation.

Let us understand this distinctly. He who breaks a physical law will be put to pain, no matter how good a Christian he may be. He who breaks an industrial law will be put to loss, no matter how regularly he goes to church. Christianity is not a utilitarian religion.

The world of Christ's own day was full of the utilitarian conception of religion. Outside of Judea, men and women who said their prayers and served the gods cared for the gods only according as they hoped to get the gods to give them something. When they were well and prosperous they had no need, they thought, for any god. But when they were in want—when they were sick and wanted strength, when they were in debt and wanted money, when they were in danger and wanted help—then they said their prayers. Religion was considered to be a contrivance for the better obtaining of good luck. Godliness and gain were thought to belong together.

This idea was not peculiar to the pagan world. It may be read in the Old Testament. Jacob vows a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I

come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: . . . and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." It is a frank bargain—on Jacob's part so much religion, on God's part so much material prosperity. Thus is put into blunt, dogmatic utterance an article of the natural creed of man. The Jews believed it. They were sure that the good would be rich, that they would want no manner of desirable thing, that they would be well and live long in the land. It is true that the spectacle of the prosperity of the wicked does for a moment perplex the faith of the psalmist, but when in the house of God he reflects upon the matter, he sees that this prosperity is but an illusive and temporary affair; these ungodly folk are set in slippery places and are cast down and destroyed. "O how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!" Job is in distress of mind and body, and his friends advise him to confess his sins; these afflictions, they assure him, are the certain signs of the wrath of the offended God; and though Job is acquitted and his friends are properly rebuked for their rash judgment, yet at the end the connection between virtue and riches is again asserted: "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses." Thus the story

ends as a story ought to end according to the popular idea of God.

The New Testament story does not end in that pleasant way. The characteristic message of the New Testament is, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The gospel begins with a list of those who are supremely blessed, and the rich and the prosperous have no place in it. "Blessed are the poor," "blessed are the hungry," "blessed are ye that weep," "blessed are ye when men shall hate you."

Jesus met the utilitarian idea of God. It was current in his time. If a man was sick, his neighbors said that he had offended God. If one was born blind, somebody had transgressed, the man or his parents. If a tower fell at Siloam, they who were touched by the dust might be good men, but they on whom the great stones fell and crushed them, the discerning tower had singled these men out for their sins, and had come down just for the purpose of coming down on them. Jesus contradicted that. He taught, indeed, in the plainest way the doctrine of the providence of God. God cares, he said. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice; not a prayer is breathed in any obscurest corner of the earth without his hearing and heeding it. But God's way is not our way, neither are his thoughts our thoughts. God does not send material prosperity to those who love him, nor adversity to those who hate him.

The books at the bank may not be put in evidence to determine the favor of God.

"Ye shall have tribulation." Ye who have been my chosen friends, who have given up all and followed me, who are doing your best now and shall presently be doing better still to do my will and keep my word, ye who love me, for whom I pray and whom I love, even ye shall taste of tribulation. That is what Jesus says. The disciples come once, like children,—or perhaps we should say like our own selves,—and ask him, What shall we have? We have been good; what will you give us? "What shall we have therefore?" Here he gives the answer, "Ye shall have tribulation."

When we have tribulation we come into that blessed company of the disciples and close friends of Jesus Christ; we stand among the saints, among those whom he loves, and we are partakers with them of his promise.

Do not think, then, in the time of trouble that God is angry with you. Do not think when sickness gets you in its hard grasp that the hand of the offended God is laid upon you. Do not think when death enters your household and takes away the light, leaving you in darkness and loneliness and desolation, that God has stolen a precious treasure from you because he wants to give you pain, or even because he thinks that pain will be profitable for you.

We wonder at the universality of tribulation.

Sometimes it seems as if God cannot care, but is only impartially, even mercilessly, indifferent. The fact is, however, that God has set certain great laws in his world, and that these laws are the basis of the best possible condition of existence. God ministers to us by these laws. We call them laws, not because they are arbitrary enactments passed in the legislature of heaven, but because they are God's customary ways of working. One of these laws is that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. In the physical world this is called the law of cause and effect. This law never fails. If seed is sown which invites a harvest of tribulation, no matter who it is that sows the seed, he will reap that harvest and no other.

Saul of Tarsus had his choice. He might have been a prosperous and comfortable rabbi, living among his books and dying in his bed. He did not sow that kind of seed. He chose a life which brought him into unpopularity, into poverty, into persecution, and finally, after scourgings and shipwrecks and imprisonments, to a violent death at the hands of the common executioner. That was the inevitable harvest, and he reaped it.

Much that we call tribulation is but the steady working of this great governing law of God. How does sickness come? We call it the visitation of God, but what does that mean? Does it mean that God in heaven has looked down into a happy home and has said to himself, "I will send

trouble there," and shortly one falls sick? Is that how it comes? I would not like to think of the Father in heaven as one who could deal with us after that fashion. That is not a true conception of the visitation of God. Sickness comes because some kind of seed has been sown which grows up into just that sort of harvest. God does not make anybody sick, as one might strike another. God does not make anybody die. These are the inevitable harvests, which are reaped because they have been sown. It is true that often they were sown ignorantly. It is true also that often they were sown by some other than those who reap. That is involved in our dependence one upon another and is a part of the price of social progress. When we ask questions we get into hard places and must confess that we do not know. The problem of pain has vexed the race ever since pain began, and is not solved yet. But there is at least this plain relation between the harvest and the seed.

It often comes to pass that they who love God most meet with the hardest tribulations. Great are the troubles of the righteous,—even in the Old Testament times they saw that,—because to be righteous means to yield obedience to the higher laws of conduct. Not infrequently the obeying of these higher laws involves the disobeying of some lesser law. Men must make their choice between the higher and the lower obedience. Life, indeed,

is made up, daily and hourly, of such choices. Sometimes health may be protected only at the price of selfishness. In the moment of supreme need, for the sake of those who are in danger, the hero makes his venture, and the coward stands comfortably by and watches him. They have their reward, as Jesus says—each of them his own reward. The hero gets what he wants, the approbation of God and of his own soul; and the coward gets what he wants,—and what the hero misses,—soundness of limb, physical comfort. In undramatic, homely ways that is forever going on. It is what Jesus meant when he said that some men lay up treasure here, while others have their treasure in heaven. They have their reward: they reap what they have sown.

He who loves God chooses the higher obedience. He is at liberty to sow whatever seed he will; he chooses this particular seed, and he reaps the harvest into which that sort of seed naturally grows, and loses the harvest which another sowing would have yielded. One who has a space of ground may sow it with cabbages or with flowers; if he plants it full of cabbages he must not complain if he has no flowers.

God permits the choice between the lower and the higher obedience to be a genuine choice. He does not play with us; he treats us like grown men. God sets no separation between danger and duty. The goodness of the Christian's errand

will not save him from the pestilence. The man faces that fact. He chooses to obey the higher law in full consciousness of the punishment, the pain, the tribulation, which his disobedience of the lower law may bring upon him. He goes straight on with eyes open, as Jesus went to Jerusalem and the cross.

When Christ spoke of tribulation he was probably thinking of this kind, not of the afflictions and troubles which are inevitable in our life so much as of the difficulties which attend the performance of Christian duty. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," because in the world there are ever present these two twin forces, suffering and sin; and the Christian, in proportion to the thoroughness of his discipleship, sets himself to heal as much as he can of the world's suffering and to amend as much as he can of the world's sin. And that means trouble, toil, anxiety, grief of ingratitude and failure, pain of opposition and enmity; that means tribulation.

It is not hard to see how tribulation, in this sense of it, may be translated into benediction. He who meets this kind of tribulation knows thereby that he is getting some Christian task accomplished; he is effecting something. Tribulation, thus understood, is the natural resistance which encounters motion. It may be escaped by the ignominy of standing still. When we feel the

strong wind blowing in our eyes we know that we are going on.

Tribulation strengthens character. The *tribulum* was the threshing instrument of the Latin farmer; it was the flail which separated the wheat from the chaff. It does that still, helping us to overcome our faults, purifying and ennobling men, so that it may be said, "It is good for me that I have been in trouble."

And when life seems uncommonly hard; when tribulation seems without purpose and without end; when we try to bring it into harmony with the wise laws of God, and fail; when we try to interpret it as a part of the higher obedience, and fail again; when we try to see how it is uplifting and strengthening us, and seem to see instead that it is degrading us and taking away our faith —then our recourse must be to him who promised not only tribulation, but good cheer also, and who in the midst of tribulations far more bitter than ours looked up with love and trust into the face of the Father. He has overcome the world. He has met its tribulations and turned them into triumphs. Trouble comes, but there is peace behind it. Tears fall like rain, but presently the sun shines, and life, like the earth, is all the better for the visitation from the clouds. Tribulations sore beset us, and the darkness hides the Master's face, but we may hear his blessed, helpful voice, the assurance of his love in all our troubles, the prom-

ise of our final victory, the pledge of a harvest which, though sown in tears, shall at last be reaped in joy. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

ST. ANANIAS.

"ANANIAS, a devout man according to the law."

There is not a church in Christendom which bears the name of St. Ananias.

There are many churches entitled for apostles about whom we know hardly anything except their names. There are churches dedicated to saints who are but names and nothing else. They never lived. St. George, for example, comes riding into the Christian calendar with his lance and his dragon out of the old pagan mythology.

Other sanctuaries bear the names of saints of whose existence there is, indeed, no question, but whose right to the title is by no means plain. St. Thomas à Becket and King Charles the Martyr are praised by some and blamed by others. They are political saints, the canonized representatives of a party in the church and in the nation, and the other party naturally takes scant account of them.

St. Ananias was a better man than any of them;

yet he has not a church to his name in any diocese in Christendom.

This, no doubt, is the fault of his unfortunate name. To a majority of people Ananias means a man who told a famous lie and got promptly and fearfully punished for it. That any other Ananias ever existed is unknown even to many regular readers of the Bible. Ananias of Jerusalem is one of the familiar characters of the New Testament, while the Ananias whom St. Paul called a devout man, and to whose devotion he had good reason to bear witness, is forgotten.

The fact is full of encouragement. It is an illustration of our abundant blunders in perspective. It shows how easily the bad gets into the foreground and obscures the good. Ananias of Jerusalem represented himself alone, or at most a few other vain folk like him, while Ananias of Damascus stood for the great body of the Christians of the time.

Sometimes we fall into a despondent temper by reason of the degeneracy of the age. Society seems to have set out upon a mad procession to the pit. Ananias of Jerusalem has his name in all the papers, with a record of his evil deeds attached; we meet him in the street, we hear him talked about by all the neighbors; and so great is the noise made by his misdeeds that we imagine that he is a majority of the population. One churchwarden robs the bank, and immediately all

the wardens and the vestrymen come under suspicion. But we are quite mistaken. St. Ananias, quiet, devout, doing his daily duty without clamor or advertisement, outnumbers his obnoxious namesake a hundred to one. The people, the plain people, are honest citizens who intend right and perform it.

It is thought, for instance, by many intelligent persons, who get their information from misleading books, that the East End of London, the Whitechapel district, is made up almost entirely of misery and sin. But Canon Barnett, who has spent a long and observant ministry in that neighborhood, and has labored wisely for its betterment, tells us that most of the people are decent and respectable, fearing God and the just law, and loving their neighbors as themselves. They have little money and are sometimes inadequately supplied with dinner, but they manage nevertheless to get a deal of satisfaction out of life and to bring up their children in the love and service of God. The world is not such a forsaken world as we sometimes imagine. God governs it, and the good are in possession of the most part of it.

A similar despondency assails the minds of some about the church. They see some foolish and superstitious service, and straightway conclude that we are all lapsing into the old vain phariseeism of mint, anise, cumin, and phylacteries. Or they hear some idle sermon in which the heedless

preacher casts discredit upon the past, and maintains that all the axioms may be disproved tomorrow, and they go away with a sad heart, feeling that the church is descending into impudent rationalism. But this is only of a piece with our familiar acquaintance with the bad Ananias and our forgetfulness of the good. The great church is made up of good, faithful, and sensible Christian people. The quiet saints like Ananias of Damascus are in majority; we need not fear.

St. Ananias was a Christian and a Hebrew at the same time.

He was probably the most eminent Chiristian in Damascus. Saul, stricken with blindness on the Damascus road, seeing the face of Jesus Christ and hearing his blessed voice, fasts and prays and waits for Christian sympathy and counsel. And in a vision he beholds a man named Ananias coming in and restoring him to sight. He knew that name. He had it on his list, that black-list of those whom he intended to bring bound to Jerusalem. It is likely that this name led all the rest, standing at the top of the page, and that not only in the order of the alphabet, but in the succession of importance. Saul's heart went out at once and naturally toward Ananias as the chief of the Damascus Christians.

At the same time, the apostle tells us that Ananias was a devout man according to the law. That means that he continued in the old paths.

He attended the service of the synagogue. He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, yielding to none in obedience to the righteous commandments of the former time. All that was good and true in the old way, all that he found still helpful to his soul, all that the new teaching left unchanged, he kept. He shared with his Jewish brethren their reverence for the sacred Scripture, while he differed from them in his application of the blessed truth of it to present life. When the prophets preached the Messiah, he accepted their instruction with a glad heart, thinking all the while of the fulfilment of it all in Jesus Christ. He was in honest and loyal sympathy with that old Judaism in which he had been brought up, respected it, loved it, and his deepest longing was that which filled the soul of St. Paul also, that the Jews might see their faith completed, as he did, in the person of his Master. Thus he was held in esteem by all the Hebrews.

It often happens that he who is in sympathy with two opposing sides gets the confidence of neither. They regard him with suspicion; they feel that he lacks earnestness. It is a strong witness to the character of St. Ananias that Christians and Hebrews alike had faith in him. He compelled respect.

This respect was never won by compromise. The prudent man, who refuses to commit himself, who smooths away the angularities of those doctrines wherein he differs from his fellows, and is

more desirous of personal popularity than of the progress of the truth, does not long deceive his neighbors. They find him out. They put no confidence in him.

That, however, does not make it necessary that a man should be a narrow partisan. There can, indeed, be no alternative between the true and the untrue. But when a considerable company of intelligent and honest people are found on each side of a great question, the inference is a reasonable one that there is truth on the two sides. Each has part of it; each is right and wrong. St. Ananias is in search of truth. Whoever has the truth, no matter by what name he calls himself, him will St. Ananias seek. The two will be in sympathy. They will, indeed, disagree in many things; that is inevitable; that comes from the elemental fact that God has made us different. But somewhere they will find accord. Ananias will overstep the boundaries of party.

Is it not the ideal attitude? Shall the liberals stand by themselves and keep no company with those who differ from them, accounting themselves to be in possession of the entire truth, and serving thus to illustrate the "narrowness of breadth"? Shall the conservatives withdraw from the society of the radicals, and hold conversation only with those who agree with their own views, and read no books except those written by their own sect, and maintain that those who do not wear their

badge are ignorant or vicious? Ananias knows better. He is a Christian who is at the same time in sympathy with all good Hebrews.

They have accomplished one of the notable achievements of life who have learned to spell evolution without an initial R. On they go into the better thinking and better living, keeping a stout hold on the past. All that was good in it they carry with them; that is the foundation upon which they build. The new illuminates and completes the old. It is related to it as flower and fruit are related to the stem.

Here is a young girl who has seen a vision in the school-room. A new light has shined upon her life. She has seen an ideal country where all the citizens are wise and well mannered. Partly from her books, partly from her teachers and companions, she has learned wonderful new truth and has set her foot upon the golden threshold of a new life. Out she comes from these experiences, with the sunrise gleaming in her face, and takes the road that leads back to her home. And her home is a dingy place with little beauty, grace, or taste about it. Her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, are not quite like the friends she had at school, and are very far removed from her new ideals. Even their speech is commonplace and ungrammatical, and sounds harsh in her cultivated ear. This is often the beginning of misunderstanding and unhappiness. The new and the old

seem separated by a great gulf. Ingratitude and suspicion grow apace. The blessing which ought to have enriched the household turns into malediction.

What is needed is the spirit of St. Ananias. The old life must be taken up with appreciation of all its honest worth. There is much more in it than she thinks. Her part is to take it all, as St. Ananias took his old Judaism, and keep in sympathetic and loving contact with it, bringing new treasures into it.

Here is a young man first making acquaintance with the world. He observes and listens, reads and thinks, and new opinions, new conceptions, fill his mind. He looks back to the homely truth which he learned of his mother and of the simple teachers of the village school, and which was taught on Sundays from the pulpit of the village church, and it all seems crude and narrow. He wonders how he could ever have accepted it so meekly and without question. His impulse is to put it away with the fairy tales of his childhood. The alternative is a critical one. Must he not, at whatever cost, set his back against the past, give up the old way and the old creed, and go on in the new road with his new companions?

St. Ananias answers the question. He had to decide it; he had to make his choice. Which shall it be, the new or the old? In the difficult alternative he chose both, holding the old and the new

together. That is the right choice. Man is made to grow, and growth is not like the building of a new house, first pulling down the old walls. It is like the progress of a tree, putting out new branches, reaching ever wider and higher, but keeping all the strength of the old also.

One day St. Ananias heard the voice of God. It came to him as it comes to us, speaking in the silence of his soul. The experience was not remote from common life. We think sometimes that God was nearer to the world in those old days than he is now, but we are mistaken. The difference is more in the record than in the event. They described it in their devout way, using the speech of spiritual life. Our manner is more commonplace and not so true. We have a feeling, we say, that we ought to do this or that. They said, God spoke to me, telling me to do it.

God spoke to Ananias. Yonder, on the Damascus road, Saul, the persecutor, had seen a vision. The light of heaven had shined into his soul. And now he lay in Damascus, humbled and blind, longing for Christian sympathy. He had been for three days at Judas's house in Straight street, and nobody had gone near him. They must have talked about it, those trembling Christians of Damascus, wondering what it meant. It was not done in a corner. It was the talk of the amazed town.

The voice of God spoke in the heart of St. Ananias, telling him that he ought to visit Saul. It was a hard errand. This mysterious blindness, this suspicious conversion, might be but a cunning trap to catch a Christian. But the divine voice did not cease. By and by he went. He took the persecutor's hand; he called him "Brother Saul"; he laid his hands on his blind eyes; he brought sight to his soul. Saul was baptized, and instructed in the gospel, and introduced into the company of the disciples. Thus did Ananias, being enabled thereunto by his sympathetic spirit. It was the natural thing for him to do.

And so began the Christian life of Saul, whom we call Paul. Beginnings are always impressive. The details of them stay in the memory. St. Paul, no doubt, forgot many a day of his long and crowded life, but he remembered that day always. Nobody knows to what extent St. Ananias speaks to-day in the sermons and epistles of St. Paul.

There are two kinds of service possible to good people: public and private—the service of St. Paul and the service of St. Ananias. Some can be leaders and influence great companies of people; others, with gifts less brilliant, can influence their neighbors, can speak a quiet word, as opportunity offers, to a friend. The cause of Jesus Christ needs both these kinds of service. In the parable, the man who had five talents and used them faith-

fully, and the man who had but two talents and yet used them with the same faithfulness, were rewarded with the same benediction. St. Ananias, going on his quiet way along the Damascus street, offers us a good example.

SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"SEEK ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The promise is partly to the individual and partly to society.

So far as it relates to the individual it seems to be contradicted by common experience. For, as a general principle, it is true everywhere and always that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

A good man who is negligent or foolish or incompetent in his business will lose money. His prayers, his excellent deeds, his Christian loyalty, his membership in the church, his righteousness, will not help him. He will be recorded with approval in the books of heaven, but he will not rank well in the books of the mercantile agencies. His neighbor who stays away from church and thus works seven days instead of six, who lets religion go and devotes himself strictly to business, whose

conscience does not hinder or perplex him in the alternative between profitable commercial shrewdness and the Sermon on the Mount, will own a better house than that for which the Christian man pays rent; and "all these things," and more too, will be added unto him.

As a matter of fact that happens every day. The general principle of the sure sequence between sowing and reaping is verified continually. There are those who read the comfortable assurances of Holy Scripture and shut the book, because they feel that the words are false.

Solomon, indeed, in his dream, was offered whatsoever he might choose, and he chose wisdom, and then riches and honor were added to the gift. But that happened a long time ago, and at best was but a dream. Men to-day choose the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and nothing is added; they go hungry.

The psalmist was either a man of scant acquaintance with the world or had the good fortune to live in an uncommonly prosperous time who said, "I have been young, and now am old; and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread."

St. Paul wrote to Timothy that "godliness has the promise of the life that now is" as well as of "that which is to come"; but in his own experience the life that now is was more than usually lacking in material satisfactions. It was full of

poverty, and unappreciated work, and hardship, and persecution.

Yet St. Paul said that. It is quite unlikely that he meant to contradict the evidence of his own senses. And the initial promise to those who shall seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness first—you know who made it. No man ever so diligently or so accurately fulfilled the conditions as he did. And you know what kind of life he lived. He was so poor that he had not where to lay his head. There were times when he seemed to have no friends. And at last everybody turned against him; they who had been his friends forsook him and fled; the leading statesmen and the chief churchmen agreed together that religion and politics would go on better if he were out; and so he died as an evil-doer. That is the commentary which is set in Holy Scripture beside this text. Whatever it means must be in agreement with this explanation.

It is accordingly evident at once that the phrase "all these things" has reference to a very simple way of living. We are surrounded in these days by an exceedingly complex and artificial civilization. Our desires are enormously in advance of our needs. What does the man want who declares that this promise is broken? He has sought the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he says, and "all these things" have not been added unto him? What things? Usually a comfortable house,

paid for and well furnished, a full larder with at least one servant to administer it, a good business, and money in the bank. It is not likely that the worldly goods of the twelve apostles put together amounted to so much as that. The promise was never intended to include that.

The ideal life, as it was described by Jesus Christ and lived by him, is not the life we live. He never put the emphasis, where we often put it, on material success. Poverty, he seems to say, is nearer akin to joy than wealth; though Francis of Assisi spoke, no doubt, in the spirit of his Master when he said that he loved poverty, but not dirt. Gentle poverty, glad simplicity, plain living, and high thinking, the kingdom of God first and all else second, the manner of the saints—that is what he meant. Happiness, as he esteemed it, does not consist in the multitude of the things which we possess. He begins his sermon with a list of the kinds of people who are beloved of God and have the best of life, and the rich have no place in it.

Jesus is preaching against needless anxiety and telling people not to worry. There is a difference between care and worry. Care has to do with the heavy responsibilities, the sore burdens, the sins and sorrows and tragedies of life. We may cast our care on him who careth for us. Worry is concerned with lesser things, and was busy in our Lord's day, even as now, asking, "What shall we eat? and, What shall we drink? and, Wherewithal

shall we be clothed?" Jesus says that the less we think about these things the better, and that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness we shall have just as much of them as we need. If we could believe that and act upon it, we would be rid of worry. Simplicity and serenity would enter into life together.

Another part of the promise which needs explanation is the word "righteousness."

Sometimes the man who complains that he has lived a righteous life, and yet has met with disappointment and disaster, is mistaken at the beginning of his argument. He has not fulfilled the conditions. He has probably been an honest man, who has kept the letter of the ten commandments, and has attended the services of the church every pleasant Sunday. That, he thinks, is what is meant by seeking the righteousness of God. The Pharisees stumbled over the same error into the bottomless pit. The amazed people, in Christ's description of the last judgment, who are seen standing astonished and perplexed on the left hand, cannot believe the evidence of their own ears. They hear the sentence of their condemnation, and they cry out, "What have we done?" Done? Nothing at all. You have been respectable enough, honest enough; you have had the good opinion of your neighbors; you have thought well of yourselves. But you have missed the meaning of righteousness.

Righteousness is not a negative virtue: it is not attained by leaving evil things undone. And it is not an individual virtue: it does not mean the same as morality. It is both positive and social. No man can be righteous by himself. The opportunity of righteousness is in society. Not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to love our neighbor as Jesus Christ loved us—that is the heart of righteousness.

Thus to seek the righteousness of God and to seek the good of our fellow-men mean very much the same thing. The condition of the promise is that we shall give ourselves for others—nothing less than that. He who has lived for his own benefit has no part in it. He who is filled with the spirit of service, who is devoted to the good of his brethren, who sacrifices his own interest for the common welfare, need have no anxiety: "All these things"—the necessary things—"shall be added unto him." That is in accord with ordinary human nature, and is proved true every day.

It is understood, then, that the expression "all these things" refers to a much simpler way of life than that to which we are accustomed, and that "righteousness" means nothing less than enthusiastic sacrifice of self for the good of others. There is still a phrase which needs translation. I mean the "kingdom of God." What is the kingdom of God?

Evidently it signifies a state of things which

concerns people in general rather than in particular. The words have a social application. They look toward an amendment of society. They suggest a condition which no one of us can fulfil singly; for its attainment we must all work together. The kingdom of God is that blessed realm wherein God reigns, obeyed and reverenced and loved by all the people. Its laws are God's laws; its ways are God's ways; its ideal of life is that which was set forth when God was made manifest in man and dwelt among us. In the divine kingdom the spirit of Jesus Christ prevails. Thus all men are brothers. It is the perfected social state.

At present this is rather in contrast than in harmony with our common life. Every day we pray for the coming of the kingdom. We have need to pray, and to do more than pray. In the meantime there is inevitable injustice. So dependent are we each upon the other that our position, as St. Paul pointed out, is like that of the members of the body: if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Thus it comes to pass that the just suffer for the unjust and at the hands of the unjust. And that must go on till the kingdom of heaven is declared in our streets and courts and markets. So that sometimes, when the promise seems to be unfulfilled, when we are inclined to wonder at the pain of life, at its perplexing inequalities, at the want of proportion between character and comfort, at the tribulations of the

saints, the cause is to be found, not in the fault of the individual, nor in the immediate will of God, but in the condition of society.

If, then, we desire the fulfilment of the promise, so that "all these things" shall be added unto all good people and the ills of poverty shall be done away, we must recognize our right relation to society. So long as we try to amend only our own lives we do much, but not enough. And even when we widen our interests and endeavor to be helpful to our near neighbors, though that is well and the kingdom of God appears on the horizon, still more is necessary. The Christian must carry his religion into all the concerns of our common life. He must read his daily paper in the spirit of religion, as he reads his Bible, expecting messages from God. He must be interested in the problems which relate to the social good. Hours and wages, industrial justice, moral, social, sanitary, and political reform, the responsibility of the voter and the citizen, may properly engage his attention and make a part of the purpose of his life.

He seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousness who lives the life of a conscientious, intelligent, enthusiastic, and aggressive Christian citizen. Thus shall the will of Heaven be fulfilled on earth and the skies begin to shine with the dawn of the new day of God.

THE CLOSED DOOR.

"And the door was shut."

That was the end. The opportunity had gone by. The door had been wide open, the bridesmaids had been expected at the wedding. But the moment came and they were not ready. And the door was shut, and stayed shut.

Is it true, then, that anybody will find the door of heaven shut? And, if it is true, of what sort will they be, and for what will they find themselves shut out? To these questions we want answers.

Is it true that anybody will find the door of heaven shut?

It is plain that we cannot of ourselves reply. We do not know anything about it. Under such circumstances, if we want an answer to a question in medicine, we consult the highest medical authorities; if it is a question in science, we consult the wisest scientific authorities. The same prudence, the same reasonableness, in religion

sends us with this question to the supreme religious authorities.

We find the supreme religious authorities in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Paul and James and Peter knew more about the destiny of man than any men who have since had residence upon this planet. The wisest words that have been spoken upon this subject by the most profound philosophers have been quoted from them. They themselves were wise because they had been taught by the supreme Teacher. Jesus Christ not only lived the ideal life in whose footsteps the holiest saints have been content to follow afar off, but he spoke eternal truth, and told it so completely that no man in all the ages since has been able to add or to subtract so much as one small syllable.

The best thing, then, that we can do, if we would get an adequate answer to this imperative question about the door of heaven, is to take it straight to the New Testament, and thus at last to him upon whose life and words all the rest of the New Testament is but a commentary.

It is answered there; and the answer is not pleasant reading.

I have no sympathy with the people who take satisfaction in the thought that some of their neighbors will be everlastingly punished, and who resent any interpretation of Holy Scripture which seems to mitigate the rigor of hell as if they were

thereby deprived of something blessed in religion. These people must be speaking in the hard language of theological argument rather than in the speech of personal conviction, or else they cannot realize what the words mean. For my part, I wish with all my heart that it might be proved beyond a peradventure that there is no hell, or at least that there will be no unhappy folk who will abide in it forever.

In the face of the very strongest statements of the Scriptures two considerations must be taken into serious account. The first is that God will punish no man who does not deserve it, nor will he punish anybody one instant longer than he deserves it. The evident lesson of the cross is that God longs for the salvation of men. Whenever any soul, in any state or place, even in the depths of the nether pit, turns toward God, God will turn toward that soul. That is the heart of the gospel. It cannot be other than true, and it must be true forever.

The other consideration is that if there are miserable people in the life to come, the happy and privileged people of the life to come will minister to them. It is impossible that there should be a selfish heaven. It is impossible that the anticipations of old Tertullian should ever be fulfilled, who imagined the redeemed walking in their robes of white along the crystal battlements of heaven and looking over with glad faces to see the damned

sweltering in the inextinguishable agonies of hell. It is impossible that the present city can be a type of the everlasting municipality of heaven, with its pleasant suburbs where the rich live amid their gardens, and its shameful slums where poverty and vice torment each other day by day. That is so bad that even we ourselves are not contented that it should go on. It is incredible that it should endure forever. If there is a hell, and wretched people suffering in it and persevering in their sins, and doomed to suffer so long as they hold out to sin, the very same blessed Christian impulse which sends people into college settlements here will send them into Christian settlements there. There will be Christian settlements in the dangerous avenues of hell. Will St. Paul be satisfied to stay in heaven, who said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren," who refuse to hear the voice of God?

When I read, then, the hard sayings of the gospels and epistles touching the fate of the wicked, I keep these things in mind: that God is ever ready to be gracious, and will take the hand of every penitent sinner throughout all eternity, and that Christians must be Christians still in heaven, unsatisfied till they have built a good wide bridge across the gulf beyond which their brethren are in torment.

And yet "the door was shut." The terrible truth which is symbolized therein is brought to

our attention over and over again in the New Testament. We think of Jesus as a gracious person, whom little children loved as soon as they saw him, who sat beneath the trees on the pleasant hillside looking out over the blue lake, and found texts in the birds and in the flowers, and preached about the blessings of God. But that same sermon spoke in the sternest speech: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger." "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

St. Paul said, "Lest, . . . having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." That touches me. Paul believed that, feared that. He was not the man to use words idly. He felt that in spite of all his Christian achievements he might still make a failure of his life. When at last the door is shut there will be Christian ministers outside.

Jesus said that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for Capernaum. That touches you. For Capernaum was a privileged city; it was a town where people had a chance. The gospel of Jesus Christ was brought very close to those people, but no closer than it is brought to you. The door stood open wide and they were invited to enter in, and presently the door was shut, and that was the end of it. They who were out stayed out; their belated knocking was not heeded.

That is true of our daily opportunities. They present themselves with open door, and when we pass along looking the other way, the door is shut, and that door never opens again. Other doors of opportunity may open, but that door never.

Thus it will be in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. What other opportunity may invite us after this life is done, we know not. There may be no opportunity at all. It is certain that this life's opportunities will then be over. At that moment the door will be shut which now stands blessedly open,—the door into the joy of the life to come,—and we will be either within or without, and that door will never open for us again. Vain then will be regret for the sins and follies of the past. The past is past. We might have done so differently: we might have put that which was of real importance first—the soul before the body, the approbation of God before the

approbation of the neighborhood, treasure in heaven before treasure in the bank; we might have so lived as to prepare us to ascend into the higher privileges of the life to come. But in the hour of death and in the day of judgment this will be of no avail. We may knock then, but it will not be opened.

That is the word of Holy Scripture, and all the analogies of experience confirm it.

Here is one who has neglected his opportunity to come into appreciation of the high thoughts of the great thinkers. He has accustomed himself to foolish and low thoughts, he has degraded his imagination, he has weakened the grasp of his mind; and he takes up a book which might have taught him wonderful new truths, which might have comforted him in his trouble or guided him in his perplexity or strengthened him in his hard task, and he turns the pages over one after another, trying painfully to understand what it is all about; the very language is unfamiliar to him, and presently he puts it down, weary and perplexed, having found nothing. Between him and the blessing of the book is a closed door.

Here is another who has thrown away not his intellectual but his spiritual opportunities. And he comes into the house of God, and the messages of God are read, and there is prayer, and the promised presence of Jesus Christ, and all about him are people who are uplifted, gladdened,

strengthened, satisfied, who go away with the benediction of heaven, while he hears nothing, perceives nothing, and goes away looking at his watch. Between him and the heaven which that hour stands open is a closed door.

So it will be in the supreme and final crisis of our life.

"And the door was shut." Within are lights and joy and the wedding-guests, and the table garnished for the wedding-supper, and the pleasant company, and the bridegroom and the bride. And who are these without in the chill darkness, on the wrong side of the closed door? Are they wicked people? Are they enemies of the bridegroom? Have they laid in wait for the wedding-party and stoned the procession as it passed? These are the bridesmaids. They have been not only invited, but especially and particularly invited.

Ill-dressed people may properly be forbidden, but these are attired in wedding-garments.

Unknown people may be denied admission, but these are acquaintances, and closer than that.

It is a shock to a good many indifferent persons to be assured that there will be those without who are quite respectable, who belong to the very best society, who are well dressed and well mannered and even well behaved. We somehow take it for granted that we will meet in heaven those whom we are accustomed to meet in society.

It may properly surprise a good many other

persons to learn, as we learn here, that among those who are without will be people who are commonly seen not only in society, but in church. These forbidden guests are members of the wedding-party. In the interpretation of the parable, Christ is the bridegroom, and these unhappy people are therefore near to him, and had no thought but that they would be admitted. Others might have some difficulty about getting in, but for such as these even the closed door would be opened. That is what they thought, and were mistaken.

Thus you see it is ourselves who are intended. These who stand without are both socially and ecclesiastically of our own kind. It is possible that some of us, who live so pleasantly, and enjoy life so irreproachably, as we think, and take delight in study, and are not even tempted very severely to commit gross sins—some of us may be without.

For strange and terrible is the place given in the gospel to sins of omission. Is it true that anybody will find the door of heaven shut? Yes; that is true. What sort of people will they be? Some of them will be people of our own kind. For what, then, will they find themselves shut out? For sins of omission.

The man with the one talent had not tried to steal the talent, had not attempted to appropriate any of his master's money to his own use. What had he done? Nothing at all. He hid it in a safe

place, and gave it back again in due time, bright, shining, and whole as he had received it. He was punished for what he had not done.

The rich man in the parable is not reported to have been a vicious person. It is true that he was handsomely attired and entertained his friends with generous hospitality, but there is no necessary sin in that; it is not iniquitous to be rich. The beggar lay on the rich man's door-step, and the rich man did not help him: that was the offense. Some people would not have let him lie upon the door-step; the rich man did not grudge him that, but he did not treat him like a brother. It may be that he thought that the beggar was made of different flesh than his and had different blood in his veins, that pain did not hurt him quite so much and that fraternal kindness was not so necessary to him. There are people who seem to think that. The Christian is tested by his behavior toward those whom he considers his social inferiors. The rich man did not stand that test; and in consequence he went, as St. Peter said upon a different occasion, to his own place; and it was not a pleasant place to go to.

They who in the great day of decision stand upon the left, who are they? Is it said to them, "You have broken the commandments; you have hated righteousness and loved iniquity"? Not at all. There they go, laden with malediction, for what they have not done. "Inasmuch as ye did

it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

The foolish bridesmaids have no oil in their lamps, and the bridegroom comes, and the door is shut.

Let us remember that it is by our opportunities that God will judge us. We who live in the midst of opportunity, to whom God has given so much, for whom so many things are possible, may profitably have that in mind. Our opportunities will be our judges. This we might have done, this we might have been; but we were intent upon something else, we took some lower standard for our life, we were satisfied with lesser things, thinking all the time that there would be years to spare when we might fulfil our neglected duties and amend the past easily and at leisure; and then, when we were not looking for him, the bridegroom came, and the door was shut.

Oh, not against us, not in the face of any of us, let that door close!

There is one door which we ourselves can shut and open. It is the door of our own heart. "Behold," the Master says, "I stand at the door, and knock." He means the door of our own heart. He wants to enter in and dwell there. He wants to make our will his will, and our life his life. The soul comes to the Beloved's door and knocks, and a voice says, "Who is there?" And the soul makes answer, "It is I." And the voice replies,

"There is not room for me and thee." Then the soul knocks again and answers, "It is thyself," and the door is opened.

If we are one with Christ, so that he dwells in us and we in him, then when we come before the everlasting doors we will not find them shut.

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